



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation





VOICES FROM THE CROWD;

AND

Other Poems.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE "SALAMANDRINE," "THE LEGENDS OF THE ISLES,"
ETC. ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

WM. S. ORR & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXLVI.

LONDON:

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS WHITEFRIARS.

PR
497
M184
1846

TO

WILLIAM HENRY ASHURST, ESQ.,

AS A SLIGHT TESTIMONIAL OF PERSONAL REGARD, AND AN EXPRESSION OF CORDIAL
GRATITUDE FROM "ONE OF THE CROWD," FOR AIDS ATTEMPTED
TO THE GREAT CAUSE OF HUMAN PROGRESS,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

THE KYRIE SOCIETY
2, MANCHESTER STREET

PREFACE.

THE author of the following verses does not intend to enter, in this place, into any arguments, to prove the fitness of political themes for the purposes of the poet. Merely party themes may be unpoetical ; but there are politics higher and purer than parties, which he, for one, will never allow to be beyond the scope and sympathies of Poetry. The great cause of Human Progress in intellectual elevation, virtue, and happiness, has required at every period of the world the support of earnest and thinking men. In this day it is more especially the duty of those who claim to be the teachers of the people—and if the man of letters be not a teacher of the people he has mistaken his vocation—to aid, by whatever means may be in their power, the progress of mankind from an imperfect into a higher and better civilisation. With this object, not because he has arbitrarily or for any purposes of popularity thought fit to devote himself to the task, but because he could not choose but utter that which was in him, the following verses were written, and are now published. Whatever, in an artistical point of view, may be

their demerits, they were not undertaken idly. On the contrary, the author devoted his best energies to them, with a hope that they might be useful in some degree, however humble, in aiding the advancement of many great questions that are now before the public in those stages of development, when the IDEA transforms itself into the FACT, and the ASPIRATION into the REALITY. Good or bad, they were the best utterance he could find at the time, or that he can find now, and as such they are offered to the consideration of those who have faith in humanity, and who look upon poetry as something better than a pastime for the idle, or an amusement for the thoughtless.

A portion of them—about one-third—have from time to time appeared in “THE DAILY NEWS,” and two or three others have seen the light elsewhere in a fugitive shape.

The favour with which they have been received is an earnest that they have not been written altogether in vain. Those now published for the first time are imbued with the same principles. To those correspondents, known and unknown, who from various parts of the country, and from the other side of the Atlantic, have encouraged him with their sympathy and approval, the author can but say how great a reward they have bestowed, and what an incentive to deserve it better in future efforts they have afforded him.

JUNE 18th, 1846.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CLEAR THE WAY	1
THE WANTS OF THE PEOPLE	3
THE THREE PREACHERS	6
OLD OPINIONS	10
DAILY WORK	14
AN EMIGRANT'S BLESSING	16
THE WATCHER ON THE TOWER	19
WAIT A LITTLE LONGER	22
THE DAYS THAT ARE GONE	25
A REMONSTRANCE WITH THE AMERICANS	28
TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS	31
THE POETRY OF RAILWAYS	34
THE FERMENTATION	36
THE POOR MAN'S SUNDAY WALK	39
A CONVICT'S BLESSING	42
ENGLAND AND FRANCE	45
THE DREAM OF THE REVELLER	48

	PAGE
THE POET AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMIST	52
A REVERIE IN THE GRASS	57
TO A FRIEND AFRAID OF CRITICS	61
A WINTER-NIGHT'S PHANTASMAGORIA	65
THE EARTH AND THE STARS	71
THE YOUNG EARTH	73
FREEDOM AND LAW	78
TRUTH AND ERROR	82
SOLITARY LOFTINESS	84
TO IMPATIENT GENIUS	85
UNA FATA MORGANA	88
THE ENGLISH PEEP-O'-DAY-BOYS	93
THE DEPOSITION OF KING CLOG	97
THE CLAIRVOYANTE.—PART I. THE INNER	102
PART II. THE OUTER	107
PART III. THE INFINITE PROGRESSION	114

VOICES FROM THE CROWD.

CLEAR THE WAY.

MEN of thought ! be up, and stirring
Night and day :

Sow the seed—withdraw the curtain—

CLEAR THE WAY !

Men of action, aid and cheer them,
As ye may !

There 's a fount about to stream,

There 's a light about to beam,

There 's a warmth about to glow,

There 's a flower about to blow ;

There 's a midnight blackness changing

Into gray ;

Men of thought, and men of action,

CLEAR THE WAY !

Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say,
What the unimagined glories
Of the day ?
What the evil that shall perish
In its ray ?

Aid the dawning, tongue and pen ;
Aid it, hopes of honest men ;
Aid it, paper—aid it, type—
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play.

Men of thought and men of action,
CLEAR THE WAY !

Lo ! a cloud 's about to vanish
From the day ;
And a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay.

Lo ! the right 's about to conquer.
CLEAR THE WAY !

With that right shall many more
Enter smiling at the door ;
With the giant wrong shall fall
Many others, great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey ;
Men of thought, and men of action,
CLEAR THE WAY !

THE WANTS OF THE PEOPLE.

WHAT do we want ? Our daily bread ;
Leave to earn it by our skill :
Leave to labour freely for it,
Leave to buy it where we will ;
For 'tis hard upon the many,
Hard—unpitied by the few,
To starve and die for want of work,
Or live, half-starved, with work to do.

What do we want ? Our daily bread ;
Fair reward for labour done ;
Daily bread for wives and children ;
All our wants are merged in one.
When the fierce fiend Hunger grips us,
Evil fancies clog our brains,
Vengeance settles on our hearts,
And Frenzy gallops through our veins.

What do we want ? Our daily bread—
Sole release from thoughts so dire :
To rise at morn with cheerful faces,
And sit at evening round the fire ;
To teach our babes the words of blessing,
Instead of curses, deep though mute ;
And tell them England is a land
Where man is happier than a brute.

What do we want ? Our daily bread :
Give us that ; all else will come ;
Self-respect and self-denial,
And the happiness of home ;
Kindly feelings, Education,
Liberty for act and thought ;
And surety that, whate'er befall,
Our children shall be fed and taught.

What do we want ? Our daily bread ;
Give us *that* for willing toil :
Make us sharers in the plenty
God has shower'd upon the soil ;
And we'll nurse our better nature
With bold hearts, and judgment strong,
To do as much as men can do,
To keep the world from going wrong.

What do we want ? Our daily bread,
And trade untrammell'd as the wind ;
And from our ranks shall spirits start,
To aid the progress of mankind.
Sages, poets, mechanics ;
Mighty thinkers shall arise,
To take their share of loftier work,
And teach, exalt, and civilise.

What do we want ? Our daily bread :—
Grant it :—make our efforts free ;
Let us work and let us prosper ;
You shall prosper more than we ;
And the humblest homes of England
Shall, in proper time, give birth
To better men than we have been,
To live upon a better earth.

THE THREE PREACHERS.

THERE are three preachers, ever preaching,
Each with eloquence and power ;
One is old, with locks of white,
Skinny as an anchorite ;
And he preaches every hour
With a shrill fanatic voice,
And a Bigot's fiery scorn :—
“ Backwards ! ye presumptuous nations ;
Man to misery is born !
Born to drudge, and sweat, and suffer—
Born to labour, and to pray ;
Backwards, ye presumptuous nations—
Back !—be humble, and obey !”

The second is a milder preacher ;
Soft he talks as if he sung ;
Sleek and slothful is his look,
And his words, as from a book,
Issue glibly from his tongue.

With an air of self-content,
High he lifts his fair white hands :—
“Stand ye still, ye restless nations ;
And be happy, all ye lands !
Earth was made by God our Father,
And to meddle is to mar ;
Change is rash, and ever was so :
We are happy as we are.”

Mightier is the younger preacher ;
Genius flashes from his eyes :
And the crowds who hear his voice,
Give him, while their souls rejoice,
Throbbing bosoms for replies.
Awed they listen, yet elated,
While his stirring accents fall ;—
“Forward ! ye deluded nations,
Progress is the rule of all :—
Man was made for healthful effort ;
Tyranny has crush'd him long ;
He shall march from good to better,
And do battle with the wrong.

“Standing still is childish folly,
Going backward is a crime :—
None should patiently endure
Any ill that he can cure ;
Onward ! keep the march of Time.

Onward, while a wrong remains
To be conquer'd by the right ;
While Oppression lifts a finger
To affront us by his might :
While an error clouds the reason—
Or a sorrow gnaws the heart—
Or a slave awaits his freedom,
Action is the wise man's part.

“ Lo ! the world is rich in blessings—
Earth and Ocean, flame and wind,
Have unnumber'd secrets still,
To be ransack'd when you will,
For the service of mankind ;
Science is a child as yet,
And her power and scope shall grow,
And her triumphs in the future
Shall diminish toil and woe,
Shall extend the bounds of pleasure
With an ever-widening ken,
And of woods and wildernesses
Make the homes of happy men.

“ Onward !—there are ills to conquer,
Ills that on yourselves you 've brought,
Tyranny is swoll'n with Pride.
Bigotry is deified,
Error intertwined with Thought.

Vice and Misery ramp and crawl,
Root them out, their day has pass'd :—
Goodness is alone immortal ;
Evil was not made to last !
Onward, and all Earth shall aid us—
Ere our peaceful flag be furl'd."—
—And the preaching of this preacher,
Stirs the pulses of the world.

OLD OPINIONS.

ONCE we thought that Power Eternal
Had decreed the woes of man ;
That the human heart was wicked,
Since its pulses first began ;—
That the earth was but a prison,
Dark and joyless at the best,
And that men were born for evil,
And imbibed it from the breast ;
That 'twas vain to think of urging
Any earthly progress on.
*Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !*

Once we thought all human sorrows
Were predestined to endure ;
That, as laws had never made them,
Laws were impotent to cure ;

That the few were born superior,
 Though the many might rebel ;
 They to sit at Nature's table,
 We to pick the crumbs that fell ;—
 They to live upon the fatness—
 We the starvelings, lank and wan.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that Kings were holy,
 Doing wrong by right divine ;
 That the Church was Lord of Conscience,
 Arbiter of Mine and Thine.
 That whatever priests commanded
 No one could reject and live ;
 And that all who differ'd from them
 It was error to forgive :—
 Right to send to stake or halter
 With eternal malison.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that sacred Freedom
 Was a cursed and tainted thing ;
 Foe of Peace, and Law, and Virtue ;
 Foe of Magistrate and King ;—

That all vile and rampant passion
Ever follow'd in her path ;
Lust and Plunder, War and Rapine,
Tears, and Anarchy, and Wrath.
That the angel was a cruel,
Haughty, blood-stain'd Amazon.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought that Education
Was a luxury for the few ;
That to give it to the many
Was to give it scope undue.
That 'twas foolish to imagine
It could be as free as air :
Common as the glorious sunshine
To the child of want and care :—
That the poor man educated,
Quarrell'd with his toil anon ;—
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Once we thought it right to foster
Local jealousies and pride ;—
Right to hate another nation
Parted from us by a tide :—

Right to go to war for glory,
 Or extension of domain :—
 Right, through fear of foreign rivals,
 To refuse the needful grain ;
 Right to bar it out till Famine
 Drew the bolt with fingers wan :
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

Old opinions, rags and tatters ;
 Ye are worn ;—ah, quite threadbare ;
 We must cast you off for ever ;—
 We are wiser than we were :
 Never fitting, always cramping,
 Letting in the wind and sleet,
 Chilling us with rheums and agues,
 Or inflaming us with heat :—
 We have found a mental raiment
 Purer, whiter to put on.
Old opinions ! rags and tatters !
Get you gone ! get you gone !

DAILY WORK.

Who lags for dread of daily work,
And his appointed task would shirk,
Commits a folly and a crime :
 A soulless slave—
 A paltry knave—
A clog upon the wheels of Time.
With work to do, and store of health,
The man's unworthy to be free,
 Who will not give,
 That he may live,
His daily toil for daily fee.

No ! Let us work ! We only ask
Reward proportioned to our task :—
We have no quarrel with the great ;
 No feud with rank—
 With mill or bank—
No envy of a lord's estate.

If we can earn sufficient store
To satisfy our daily need ;
And can retain,
For age and pain,
A fraction, we are rich indeed.

No dread of toil have we or ours ;
We know our worth, and weigh our powers ;
The more we work the more we win :
Success to Trade !
Success to Spade !
And to the Corn that's coming in !
And joy to him, who o'er his task
Remembers toil is Nature's plan :
Who, working, thinks—
And never sinks
His independence as a man.

Who only asks for humblest wealth,
Enough for competence and health ;
And leisure, when his work is done,
To read his book
By chimney nook,
Or stroll at setting of the sun.
Who toils as every man should toil
For fair reward, erect and free :
These are the men—
The best of men—
These are the men we mean to be !

AN EMIGRANT'S BLESSING.

FAREWELL, England ! blessings on thee,
Stern and niggard as thou art ;
Harshly, Mother, thou hast used me,
And my bread thou hast refused me ;
But 'tis agony to part.
'Twill pass over ; for I would not
Bear again what I could tell ;—
Half the ills that I have suffer'd :
Though I loved thee twice as well.
So—my blessings on thee, England.
And a long and last farewell.

Other regions will provide me
Independence for my age ;
Recompense for hard exertion—
For my children the reversion
Of a goodly heritage.
England—*this* thou couldst not give me ;

England, pamperer of squires,
Landlord-ridden, pride-encumber'd,
Quencher of the poor man's fires ;—
But, farewell ! My blessing on thee ;
Thou art country of my sires.

Though I love, I 'm glad to fly thee ;
Who would live in hopeless toil,
Evil-steep'd and ill-exampled,
Press'd and jostled, crush'd and trampled,
Interloper on the soil ?—
If there were *one* other country
Where an honest man might go :
Winning corn-fields from the forest—
All his own, too—blow by blow ?
Farewell, England—I regret thee,
But my tears refuse to flow.

Haply o'er the southern ocean
I shall do my part, to rear
A new nation, Saxon-blooded,
Which with plenty crowned and studded,
To its happy children dear,
Shall eclipse thy fame, O England ;
Taught and warned alike by thee ;—
Mightier with unshackled commerce,
Mightier in her men more free,
Mightier in her virgin vigour,
And her just equality.

But farewell. My blessing on thee !
Never, till my latest day,
Shall my memory cease to ponder
On thy fate, where'er I wander ;—
Never shall I cease to pray
That thy poor may yet be happy ;
That thy rich their pride may quell ;
That thou may'st in peaceful progress
All thy misery dispel ;—
Queen of nations : once their model—
God be with thee ! Fare-thee-well !

THE WATCHER ON THE TOWER.

“WHAT dost thou see, lone watcher on the tower ?
Is the day breaking ? comes the wished-for hour ?
Tell us the signs, and stretch abroad thy hand,
If the bright morning dawns upon the land.”

“The stars are clear above me, scarcely one
Has dimmed its rays in reverence to the sun ;
But yet I see on the horizon’s verge,
Some fair, faint streaks, as if the light would surge.”

“Look forth again, oh, watcher on the tower—
The people wake, and languish for the hour ;
Long have they dwelt in darkness, and they pine
For the full daylight that they know MUST shine.”

“I see not well—the morn is cloudy still ;
There is a radiance on the distant hill.
Even as I watch the glory seems to grow ;
But the stars blink, and the night breezes blow.”

“ And is that all, oh, watcher on the tower ?
Look forth again ; it must be near the hour.
Dost thou not see the snowy mountain copes,
And the green woods beneath them on the slopes ? ”

“ A mist envelops them ; I cannot trace
Their outline ; but the day comes on apace.
The clouds roll up in gold and amber flakes,
And all the stars grow dim. The morning breaks.”

“ We thank thee, lonely watcher on the tower ;
But look again ; and tell us, hour by hour,
All thou beholdest ; many of us die
Ere the day comes ; oh, give them a reply.”

“ I see the hill-tops now ; and Chanticleer
Crows his prophetic carol on mine ear ;
I see the distant woods and fields of corn,
And ocean gleaming in the light of morn.”

“ Again—again—oh, watcher on the tower—
We thirst for daylight, and we bide the hour,
Patient, but longing. Tell us, shall it be
A bright, calm, glorious daylight for the free ? ”

“ I hope, but cannot tell. I hear a song,
Vivid as day itself ; and clear and strong ;
As of a lark—young prophet of the noon—
Pouring in sunlight his seraphic tune.”

“What doth he say—oh, watcher on the tower ?
Is he a prophet ? Doth the dawning hour
Inspire his music ? *Is* his chant sublime
With the full glories of the Coming Time ?”

“He prophesies ;—his heart is full ;—his lay
Tells of the brightness of a peaceful day—
A day not cloudless, nor devoid of storm,
But sunny for the most, and clear and warm.”

“We thank thee, watcher on the lonely tower,
For all thou tellest. Sings he of an hour
When Error shall decay, and Truth grow strong,
And Right shall rule supreme and vanquish Wrong ?”

“He sings of brotherhood, and joy, and peace,
Of days when jealousies and hate shall cease :
When war shall die, and man’s progressive mind
Soar as unfettered as its God designed.”

“Well done ! thou watcher on the lonely tower !
Is the day breaking ? dawns the happy hour ?
We pine to see it :—tell us, yet again,
If the broad daylight breaks upon the *plain* ?”

“It breaks—it comes—the misty shadows fly :—
A rosy radiance gleams upon the sky ;
The mountain tops reflect it calm and clear ;
The plain is yet in shade ; but day is near.”

“WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.”

THERE 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
We may not live to see the day,
But earth shall glisten in the ray
Of the good time coming.
Cannon balls may aid the truth,
But thought 's a weapon stronger ;
We 'll win our battle by its aid ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
The pen shall supersede the sword,
And Right, not Might, shall be the lord,
In the good time coming.
Worth, not Birth, shall rule mankind,
And be acknowledged stronger ;
The proper impulse has been given ;—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
War in all men's eyes shall be
A monster of iniquity,
In the good time coming.
Nations shall not quarrel then,
To prove which is the stronger ;
Nor slaughter men for glory's sake ;—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Hateful rivalries of creed
Shall not make their martyrs bleed
In the good time coming.
Religion shall be shorn of pride,
And flourish all the stronger ;
And Charity shall trim her lamp ;—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
And a poor man's family
Shall not be his misery,
In the good time coming.
Every child shall be a help,
To make his right arm stronger ;
The happier he, the more he has ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Little children shall not toil,
Under, or above, the soil,
In the good time coming ;
But shall play in healthful fields,
Till limbs and mind grow stronger ;
And every one shall read and write ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
The people shall be temperate,
And shall love instead of hate,
In the good time coming.
They shall use, and not abuse,
And make all virtue stronger.
The reformation has begun ;—
Wait a little longer.

There 's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming :
Let us aid it all we can,
Every woman, every man,
The good time coming.
Smallest helps, if rightly given,
Make the impulse stronger ;
'Twill be strong enough one day ;—
Wait a little longer.

THE DAYS THAT ARE GONE.

Who is it that mourns for the days that are gone,
When a noble could do as he liked with his own ?
When his serfs, with their burdens well filled on their backs,
Never dared to complain of the weight of a tax ?
When his word was a statute, his nod was a law,
And for aught but his "order" he cared not a straw ?
When each had his dungeon and racks for the poor,
And a gibbet to hang a refractory boor ?

They were days when a man with a thought in his pate,
Was a man that was born for the popular hate ;
And if 'twere a thought that was good for his kind,
The man was too vile to be left unconfined ;
The days when obedience in right or in wrong,
Was always the sermon and always the song ;
When the people, like cattle, were pounded or driven,
And to scourge them was thought a King's license from
heaven.

They were days when the sword settled questions of right,
And Falsehood was first to monopolise *Might* ;
When the fighter of battles was always adored,
And the greater the tyrant, the dearer the Lord ;
When the King, who, by myriads, could number his slain,
Was considered by far the most worthy to reign ;
When the fate of the multitude hung on his breath—
A god in his life, and a saint in his death.

They were days when the headsman was always prepared—
The block ever ready—the axe ever bared ;
When a corpse on the gibbet aye swung to and fro,
And the fire at the stake never smouldered too low,
When famine and age made a woman a witch,
To be roasted alive, or be drowned in a ditch ;
When difference of creed was the vilest of crime,
And martyrs were burned half a score at a time.

They were days when the gallows stood black in the way,
The larger the town the more plentiful they ;
When Law never dreamed it was good to relent,
Or thought it less wisdom to kill than prevent ;
When Justice herself, taking Law for her guide,
Was never appeased till a victim had died ;
And the stealer of sheep, and the slayer of men,
Were strung up together again and again.

They were days when the crowd had no freedom of speech,
And reading and writing were out of its reach ;
When ignorance, stolid and dense, was its doom,
And bigotry swathed it from cradle to tomb ;
When the few thought the many mere workers for them,
To use them, and when they had used, to condemn ;
And the many, poor fools, thought the treatment their due,
And crawled in the dust at the feet of the few.

No—the Present, though clouds o’er her countenance roll,
Has a light in her eyes, and a hope in her soul.
And *we* are too wise, like the bigots to mourn,
For the darkness of days that shall never return.
Worn out, and extinct, may their history serve
As a beacon to warn us whene’er we would swerve ;
To shun the oppression, the folly, and crime,
That blacken the page of the records of Time.

Their chivalry lightened the gloom, it is true,
And honour and loyalty dwelt with the few ;
But small was the light, and of little avail,
Compared with the blaze of our *Press* and our *Rail*.
Success to that blaze ! May it shine over all,
Till Ignorance learn with what grace she may fall,
And fly from the world with the sorrow she wrought,
And leave it to Virtue and Freedom of Thought.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH THE AMERICANS.

MARCH, 1846.

BROTHERS, why this rage and scorn ?

Why these gibes and tauntings flung ?
Were your sires not English born ?

Speak you not the English tongue ?
Think you not with English thought ?

Is not Shakspeare yours and ours ?
And the same religion taught

In our cities, and your bowers ?
Brothers, turn your thoughts to peace,
And let all this discord cease.

Why should war affright the earth ?

Were the lands you covet thus,
Richer, larger, better worth,

Wherefore should you fight with us ?

'Twould be scandal to our kind,

An opprobrium to our creed,
If through rage and malice blind,

One American should bleed ;
Or if England's meanest son
Lost his life for Oregon.

If ye so desire the land,
Bide your hour—'twill not be long—
Clear it—plant it—send a band,
Peaceful, enterprising, strong,
Who will people all the clime,—
Spreading Commerce as they go,
Free to answer in their time,
When you ask them “ Yes, or no !”
But beware, for Freedom's sake—
Oh, beware, the part you take.

It would be a dastard shame—
Shame more deep than words can breathe,
If for *this* we lit the flame,
Or drew weapon from its sheath.
Deeper guilt, more heinous sin,
If the foolish quarrel grew,
And the nations, pressing in,
Ranged themselves for us or you,
And the earth was filled with hate,
Because *you* were insatiate.

Freedom's prophet, England taught—
And you learned what she instilled ;
You the inspiration caught ;
Be *your* prophecy fulfilled.
Show the world, who doubts the fact,
That of Freedom is not born

Rabble passion, frenzied act,
Utter recklessness and scorn,—
If so once, they need not be ;—
Wisdom dwells with Liberty.

Let the bloody flag be furl'd :
Nobler is the task we 're set ;
And 'tis treason to the world
To neglect it, or forget.
SCIENCE woos us to her arms ;
New DISCOVERY waits our time ;
Young INVENTION spreads her charms ;
KNOWLEDGE beckons us to climb.
Brothers, join us in the van,
And we 'll lead the march of man.

But if madly bent on strife,
And all reason speaks in vain,
Be the guilt of every life
In the unnatural contest slain
On your heads ;—and ere 'tis o'er,
Such a lesson you shall learn,
As shall sicken you of war.
Brothers, for your hand we yearn !
Let us give our thoughts to peace ;
Let this foolish discord cease.

TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

ON HIS SPEECH IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, ON THE SECOND
OF JANUARY, 1846, RECOMMENDING THE SEIZURE OF
THE OREGON TERRITORY.

QUINCY ADAMS, Quincy Adams,
English hearts are pained to view
Such a burst of foolish passion
In an ancient man like you.
Though they scorn you not, nor hate you,
Yet they pity, and deplore,
That when Age has cooled your pulses,
Wisdom has not taught you more.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Cling to right whate'er it cost ;
Plunder never pays a nation
For the honour it has lost.
You should know it—you should teach it,
That with Many as with One,
Evil gains are daily curses,
Fruits to wither in the sun.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
If from no desire of spoil,
But from honest misconception
You and yours have bred this broil,
Let a Congress of the nations,
Men of honour, firm and true,
Hear the claim and give decision
Fairly betwixt us and you.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Men will think, whate'er you say,
If, when urged to this solution,
You persist in answering, Nay,
That your Code is like the robber's,
Force, not Right, to win the prize ;
That your quarrel is not honest,
And your logic built on lies.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Trust us English. Take our word,
'Tis not fear—or debt—or weakness,
Makes us loth to draw the sword.
Though 'tis bad to lose a battle,
'Tis not perfect good to win ;
We have learned a useful lesson :
Both are bad. We 'll not begin.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
We could work you fearful woe ;
But what pleasure could it give us,
Though we crushed you at a blow ?
We are elder—you are younger—
We the man, and you the boy ;
And we 'd rather clothe than fight you,
Rather cherish than destroy.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
War has lessons you should con ;
Think upon them—use your reason—
Arbitrate for Oregon.
If you *will* dispute—so be it,
We 'll be ready ere the time :
But, Old Man, to death descending,
Weigh the sorrow, weigh the crime.

Quincy Adams, Quincy Adams,
Think that you have done your best,
To enkindle wrath and ruin,
Ere you sink into your rest.
Think that millions of your fellows
May have cause to curse your name ;—
Quincy Adams, take our offer,
And retract—retract for shame.

THE POETRY OF RAILWAYS.

No poetry in Railways ! foolish thought
Of a dull brain, to no fine music wrought.
By mammon dazzled, though the people prize
The gold alone, yet shall not we despise
The triumphs of our time, or fail to see
Of pregnant mind the fruitful progeny
Ushering the daylight of the world's new morn.
Look up, ye doubters, be no more forlorn !—
Smooth your rough brows, ye little wise : rejoice,
Ye who despond : and with exulting voice
Salute, ye earnest spirits of our time,
The young Improvement ripening to her prime,
Who, in the fulness of her genial youth,
Prepares the way for Liberty and Truth,
And breaks the barriers that, since earth began,
Have made mankind the enemy of man.

Lay down your rails, ye nations, near and far—
Yoke your full trains to Steam's triumphal car :
Link town to town ; unite in iron bands
The long-estranged and oft-embattled lands.
Peace, mild-eyed Seraph—Knowledge, light divine,
Shall send their messengers by every line.

Men, joined in amity, shall wonder long
That Hate had power to lead their fathers wrong ;
Or that false Glory lured their hearts astray,
And made it virtuous and sublime to slay.

Blessings on Science ! When the earth seemed old,
When Faith grew doting, and the Reason cold,
'Twas she discovered that the world was young,
And taught a language to its lisping tongue :
'Twas she disclosed a future to its view,
And made old knowledge pale before the new.

Blessings on Science ! In her dawning hour
Faith knit her brow, alarmed for ancient power ;
Then looked again upon her face sincere,
Held out her hand, and hailed her—Sister dear ;
And Reason, free as eagle on the wind,
Swooped o'er the fallow meadows of the mind,
And, clear of vision, saw what seed would grow
On the hill slopes, or in the vales below ;
What in the sunny South or nipping Nord,
And from her talons dropped it as she soared.

Blessings on Science, and her handmaid Steam !
They make Utopia only half a dream ;
And show the fervent, of capacious souls,
Who watch the ball of Progress as it rolls,
That all as yet completed, or begun,
Is but the dawning that precedes the sun.

THE FERMENTATION.

LONELY sitting, deeply musing,
On a still and starry night,
Full of fancies, when my glances
Turned upon those far romances
Scattered o'er the Infinite ;
On a sudden, broke upon me
Murmurs, rumours, quick and loud,
And, half-waking, I discovered
An innumerable crowd.

'Mid the uproar of their voices
Scarcely could I hear a word ;
There was rushing, there was crushing,
And a sound like music gushing,
And a roar like forests stirred
By a fierce wind passing o'er them :—
And a voice came now and then,
Louder than them all, exclaiming
“ Give us Justice ! we are men ! ”

And the longer that I listened,
More distinctly could I hear,
'Mid the poising of the voicing,
Sounds of sorrow and rejoicing,
Utterance of Hope and Fear ;
And a clash of disputation,
And of words at random cast—
Truths and Errors intermingling,
Of the present and the past.

Some were shouting that Oppression
Held their consciences in thrall ;
Some were crying " Men are dying,
Hunger-smit, and none supplying
Bread, the birthright of us all."
Some exclaimed that Wealth was haughty,
Harsh, and callous to the poor ;—
Others cried, the poor were vicious,
Idle, thankless, insecure.

Some, with voice of indignation,
Told the story of their wrongs,
Full of dolour—life-controller—
That for difference of colour
They were sold and scourged with thongs.
Others, pallid, weak, and shivering,
Said that laws were surely bad,
When the willing hand was idle,
And the cheeks of Toil were sad.

“ Give us freedom for the conscience !”

“ Equal rights !”—“ Unfettered Mind !”

“ Education !”—“ Compensation !”

“ Justice for a mighty nation !”

“ Progress !”—“ Peace with all mankind !”

“ Let us labour !”—“ Give us churches !”

“ Give us Corn where'er it grow !”

These, and other cries, around me

Surged incessant, loud or low.

Old opinions jarred with new ones ;

New ones jostled with the old ;

In such Babel, few were able

To distinguish truth from fable,

In the tale their neighbours told.

But one voice above all others

Sounded like the voice of ten,

Clear, sonorous, and persuasive :—

“ Give us Justice ! we are men !”

And I said, “ Oh Sovereign Reason,

Sire of Peace and Liberty !

Aid for ever their endeavour :—

Boldly let them still assever

All the rights they claim in thee.

Aid the mighty Fermentation

Till it purifies at last,

And the Future of the people

Is made brighter than the Past.”

THE POOR MAN'S SUNDAY WALK.

THE morning of our rest has come,
The sun is shining clear ;
I see it on the steeple-top :
Put on your shawl, my dear,
And let us leave the smoky town,
The dense and stagnant lane,
And take our children by the hand
To see the fields again.
I've pined for air the live-long week ;
For the smell of new-mown hay ;
For a pleasant, quiet, country walk,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

Our parish church is cold and damp ;
I need the air and sun ;
We'll sit together on the grass,
And see the children run.

We'll watch them gathering buttercups,
Or cowslips in the dell,
Or listen to the cheerful sounds
Of the far-off village bell ;
And thank our God with grateful hearts,
Though in the fields we pray ;
And bless the healthful breeze of heaven,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

I'm weary of the stifling room,
Where all the week we're pent ;
Of the alley filled with wretched life,
And odours pestilent.
And long once more to see the fields,
And the grazing sheep and beeves ;
To hear the lark amid the clouds,
And the wind among the leaves ;
And all the sounds that glad the air
On green hills far away :—
The sounds that breathe of Peace and Love,
On a sunny Sabbath day.

For somehow, though they call it wrong,
In church I cannot kneel
With half the natural thankfulness
And piety I feel,
When out, on such a day as this,
I lie upon the sod,

And think that every leaf and flower
Is grateful to its God :
That I who feel the blessing more
Should thank him more than they,
That I can elevate my soul
On a sunny Sabbath day.

Put on your shawl, and let us go ;—
For one day let us think
Of something else than daily care,
Of toil, and meat, and drink :
For one day let our children sport
And feel their limbs their own ;
For one day let us quite forget
The grief that we have known :—
Let us forget that we are poor ;
And, basking in the ray,
Thank God that we can still enjoy
A sunny Sabbath day.

A CONVICT'S BLESSING.

BLESSINGS on England !—but why should *I* bless her ?

I that she tutored from bad into worse ;—

I that could never, since Reason possessed me,

Balance my faults by the weight of my purse.

She's a very good land for the man who has money,

But Misery gives her, as I do, a curse.

What else should I give her ? One day, in my boyhood,

I plucked from a branch a fair apple, that swung

Tempting and ripe o'er the wall of an orchard,

But ere the first morsel delighted my tongue,

Was hurried to gaol, where some older offenders

Conceived it their duty to train up the young.

When I came out, is it likely that goodness

Brightened my face or made warmth in my breast ?

Blighted in name, with a mark set upon me,

And vengeance within me to trouble my rest—

I practised their lessons for want of employment,

And lived upon others, and fared on the best.

For three dreary months I was doomed to the treadmill,
For killing a pheasant one midsummer night ;
For six I was shut from all sight of my fellows,
For catching a hare when my pocket was light ;
And now I am banished for shooting a keeper—
A murder or manslaughter—done in a fight.

Blessings on England ! Perhaps—when she alters,
And ceases to worship a lord, as a lord ;
When the soul of a man is worth more than a partridge,
And labour may see healthy cheeks at its board ;
When her laws are alike for her poor and her wealthy ;
And Justice is not quite so fond of her sword.

Meantime I can give her but that which is in me,
That which will cling to my heart evermore ;
That which so many, heart-broken have given her,
To rankle and fester, life-deep at her core ;
The curse which she gave me instead of a blessing—
The curse which she brands me with, leaving her shore.

Had she but taught me in days of my childhood,
The folly of youth had not ripened to crime ;
Had she but given me a chance of amendment,
I might have been useful and happy in time ;
Had she not treated the boy like a felon,
The man might have been a good man ere his prime.

But *this* was denied me. So, blessings on England !

Blessings—ay, give them that name if ye will ;—
Such blessings as mine ever turn into curses—

I cannot give good for a life-time of ill.

Blessings on England ! the word may be pleasant ;

But the Curse and the Vengeance shall follow her still.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

WE make no boast of Waterloo ;
Its name excites no pride in us ;
We have no hatred of the French,
No scorn of Yankee or of Russ.
The GLORY that our fathers gained
In bloody warfare years ago,
And which they talk of o'er their cups,
Gives us no joy to think upon.

In truth we rather love the French,
And think our fathers did them wrong ;
And sometimes blush when in the streets,
Quite out of date, an ancient song—
Ghost of a prejudice—comes back,
And tells us how, in days gone out,
The best of Englishmen was he,
Who put a dozen French to rout.

We have no foolish thoughts like these,
Of France, or any other land ;
And jealousies so poor and mean,
We 're somewhat slow to understand.

We 'd rather with our friends, the French,
Encourage kindliness of thought,
Than gain a score of Waterloos,
Or any battle ever fought.

And in this year of "forty-six,"
We rising men, in life's young prime,
Are men who think the French have done
The world good service in their time.
And for their sakes, and for our own,
And Freedom's sake o'er all the earth,
We 'd rather let old feuds expire,
And cling to something better worth.

If thought of battles gained by us
Disturb or gall them, let it rest ;—
Napoleon was a man of men,
But neither wickedest nor best ;
Neither a demon nor a god ;
And if they *will* adore a king,
The honest man who rules them now
Deserves a little worshipping.

To be at strife, however just,
Has no attraction to our mind :
And as for nations fond of war,
We think them pests of humankind.

Still—if there *must* be rivalry
Betwixt us and the French;—why then
Let earth look on us, while we show
Which of the two are better men.

We'll try the rivalry of Arts,
Of Science, Learning, Freedom, Fame—
We'll try who first shall light the world
With Charity's divinest flame—
Who best shall elevate the poor,
And teach the wealthy to be true :
We want no rivalry of arms,
We want no boasts of Waterloo.

THE DREAM OF THE REVELLER.

AS SUNG BY MR. H. RUSSELL.

AROUND the board the guests were met, the lights above
them beaming,

And in their cups, replenish'd oft, the ruddy wine was
streaming ;

Their cheeks were flushed, their eyes were bright, their
hearts with pleasure bounded,

The song was sung, the toast was given, and loud the revel
sounded.

I drained a goblet with the rest, and cried, " Away with
sorrow !

Let us be happy for to-day ; what care we for to-morrow ? "

But as I spoke, my sight grew dim, and slumber deep came
o'er me,

And, 'mid the whirl of mingling tongues, this vision passed
before me.

Methought I saw a demon rise : he held a mighty bicker,
Whose burnish'd sides ran brimming o'er with floods of
burning liquor,

Around him press'd a clamorous crowd, to taste this liquor,
greedy,
But chiefly came the poor and sad, the suffering and the
needy ;
All those oppress'd by grief or debt, the dissolute, the lazy,
Blar-eyed old men and reckless youths, and palsied women
crazy ;
“ Give, give !” they cried, “ Give, give us drink, to drown
all thought of sorrow ;
If we are happy for to-day, we care not for to-morrow !”

The *first* drop warmed their shivering skins, and drove away
their sadness ;
The *second* lit their sunken eyes, and filled their souls with
gladness ;
The *third* drop made them shout and roar, and play each
furious antic ;
The *fourth* drop boiled their very blood ; and the *fifth* drop
drove them frantic :—
“ Drink !” said the Demon, “ Drink your fill ! drink of these
waters mellow !
They 'll make your eye-balls sear and dull, and turn your
white skins yellow ;
They 'll fill your homes with care and grief, and clothe your
backs with tatters ;
They 'll fill your hearts with evil thoughts ; but never mind !
—what matters ?

“ Though virtue sink, and reason fail, and social ties dissever,
I'll be your friend in hour of need, and find you homes for
ever ;

For I have built three mansions high, three strong and goodly
houses,

To lodge at last each jolly soul, who all his life carouses.—

The *first* it is a spacious house, to all but sots appalling,
Where, by the parish bounty fed, vile, in the sunshine
crawling,

The worn-out drunkard ends his days, and eats the dole of
others,

A plague and burthen to himself, an eye-sore to his
brothers.

“ The *second* is a larger house, rank, fetid, and unholy ;
Where, smitten by diseases foul and hopeless melancholy,
The victims of potations deep pine on a couch of sadness,
Some calling Death to end their pain, and others wrought to
madness :

The *third* and last is black and high, the abode of guilt and
anguish,

And full of dungeons deep and fast, where death-doomed
felons languish ;

So drain the cup, and drain again ! One of my goodly
houses,

Shall lodge at last each jolly soul who to the dregs
carouses ! ”

But well he knew—that Demon old—how vain was all his
preaching,
The ragged crew that round him flocked were heedless of
his teaching ;
Even as they heard his fearful words, they cried, with shouts
of laughter,—
“ Out on the fool who mars to-day with thought of an
hereafter !
We care not for thy houses three ; we live but for the
present ;
And merry will we make it yet, and quaff our bumpers
pleasant.”
Loud laughed the fiend to hear them speak, and lifting high
his bicker,
“ Body and soul are mine !” said he, “ I ’ll have them *both*
for liquor.”

THE POET AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

A DIALOGUE.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

PRITHEE, Poet, why this spinning,
Spinning verses all the day ?
Vain and idle thy vocation,—
Thou art useless to the nation,
In thy labour and thy play.

Little doth the world esteem thee,
And it takes thee at thy worth ;
Loftiest rhyme that e'er was fashioned,
Sounding, gorgeous, or impassioned,
Is a drug upon the earth.

Go—and be a cotton-spinner ;
Put thy hand upon the spade ;
Weave a basket out of willow ;
Dig the mine, or sail the billow ;
Anything but such a trade.

THE POET.

Why thy scorn, O man of logic ?

Speak of that within thy ken ;
I despise thee not ;—thy labours,
If they make us better neighbours,
Are not valueless to men.

Highly all the world esteems thee,
And a poet may declare,
That the wise should place reliance
On the efforts of thy science
To diminish human care.

Bring thy hidden truth to daylight,
And I'll ne'er complain of thee ;
Dull thou 'rt called—and dullness cumber,
Yet there's Wisdom in *thy* numbers ;
Leave *my* numbers unto me.

Each of us fulfils a mission,
And, though scorned, I'll cling to mine,
With a passion ever growing
In my heart, to overflowing ;—
Cling thou with as much to thine.

Thou 'rt a preacher ;—*I* 'm a prophet.
Thou discourest to thy time ;
I discourse to generations ;—
And the thoughts of unborn nations
Shall be fashioned by my rhyme.

Thou, to dubious politicians
 Staid and passionless and slow,
Givest pros and cons with candour,
Bland and patient, growing blander
 As thy trim deductions flow.

I send forth electric flashes
 To the bosom of the crowd ;
Rule its pulses, cheer its sadness,
Make it throb, and pant with gladness,
 Till it answers me aloud.

Not for me to linger idly,
 Gathering garlands by the way ;
Singing but of flowers and sunsets,
Lovers' vows, or knightly onsets,
 Or of ladies fair as May.—

No, the poet knows his mission,
 Nature's lyre is all his own ;
He can sweep its strings prophetic,
Till the nations sympathetic,
 Gather breathless to its tone.

For he knows the PEOPLE listen
 When a mighty spirit speaks,
And that none can stir them duly,
But the man that loves them truly,
 And from *them* his impulse seeks.

What they feel, but cannot utter ;
What they hope for, day and night ;—
These the words by which he fires them,
Prompts them, leads them, and inspires them
To do battle for the right.

These the words by which the many
Cope for justice with the few ;—
These their watch-words, when oppression
Would resist the small concession
But a fraction of their due.

These the poet, music-hearted,
Blazons to the listening land,
And for these all lands shall prize him,
Though the foolish may despise him,
Or the wise misunderstand.

Go thy way, then, man of logic,
In *thy* fashion, speak *thy* truth ;—
Thou hast fixed, and I have chosen ;—
Thou shalt speak to blood that 's frozen,
I to vigour and to youth.

Haply we shall both be useful,
And, perchance, more useful thou,
If their full degree of merit
Unto other moods of spirit
Thou wilt cheerfully allow.

As for me, I fear no scorning,
And shall speak with earnest mind
What is in me ;—self-rewarded
If I aid, though unregarded,
The advancement of my kind.

A REVERIE IN THE GRASS.

THERE let me rest, amid the bearded grass
Sprinkled with buttercups ; and idly pass
One hour of sunshine on the green hill slope :
Watching the ridged clouds, that o'er the cope
Of visible heaven sail quietly along ;
Listening the wind, or rustling leaves, or song
Of blackbird, or sweet ringdove in the copse
Of pines and sycamores, whose dark green tops
Form a clear outline right against the blue :—
Here let me lie and dream : losing from view
All vexed and worldly things ; and for one hour
Living such life as green leaf in a bower
Might live ; breathing the calm pure air,
Heedless of hope, or fear, or joy, or care.

Oh, it is pleasant in this summer time
To be alone, to meditate and rhyme :
To hear the bee plying his busy trade,
Or grasshopper alert in sun and shade,
With bright large eyes and ample forehead bald,
Clad in cuirass and cuishes emerald.

Here let me rest, and for a little space
Shut out the world from my abiding place ;
Seeing around me nought but grass and bent,
Nothing above me but the firmament ;
For such my pleasure, that in solitude
Over my seething fancies I may brood,
Encrucible and moulded as I list,
And I, expectant as an alchymist.

Oh, beautiful green grass ! Earth's covering fair !
What shall be sung of thee, nor bright, nor rare,
Nor highly thought of ? Long green grass that waves
By the wayside—over the ancient graves—
Or shoulders of the mountain looming high—
Or skulls of rocks—bald in their majesty,
Except for thee, that in the crevices
Liv'st on the nurture of the sun and breeze ;—
Adorner of the nude rude breast of hills ;
Mantle of meadows ; fringe of gushing rills ;
Humblest of all the humble :—Thou shalt be,
If to none else, exalted unto me,
And for a time a type of Joy on Earth—
Joy unobtrusive, of perennial birth,
Common as light and air, and warmth and rain,
And all the daily blessings that in vain
Woo us to gratitude : the earliest born
Of all the juicy verdures that adorn
The fruitful bosom of the kindly soil,
Pleasant to eyes that ache and limbs that toil.

Lo ! as I muse, I see the bristling spears
Of thy seed-bearing stalks, which some, thy peers,
Lift o'er their fellows—nodding to and fro
Their lofty foreheads as the wild winds blow.
And think thy swarming multitudes a host
Drawn up embattled on their native coast
And officered for war :—the spearmen free
Raising their weapons, and the martial bee
Blowing his clarion—while some poppy tall
Displays the blood-red banner over all.

Pleased with the thought, I nurse it for awhile;
And then dismiss it with a faint half smile:
And next I fancy thee a multitude,
Moved by one breath—obedient to the mood
Of one strong thinker—the resistless wind,
That passing o'er thee bends thee to its mind.
See how thy blades, in myriads as they grow,
Turn ever eastward as the west winds blow ;
Just as a human crowd is swayed and bent
By some great preacher, madly eloquent,
Who moves them at his will, and with a breath
Gives them their bias both in life and death.
Or by some wondrous actor, when he draws
All eyes and hearts, amid a hushed applause
Not to be uttered lest delight be marred ;
Or, greater still, by hymn of prophet-bard,
Who moulds the lazy present by his rhyme,
And sings the glories of the coming time.

And ye are happy, green leaves every one.
Spread in your countless thousands to the sun.
Unlike mankind, no solitary blade
Of all your verdure ever disobeyed
The law of Nature : every stalk that lifts
Its head above the mould enjoys the gifts
Of liberal heaven—the rain, the dew, the light—
And points, though humbly, to the Infinite ;
And every leaf, a populous world, maintains
Invisible nations on its wide-stretched plains.
So great is littleness ! the mind at fault,
Between the peopled leaf and starry vault,
Doubts which is grandest, and with holy awe
Adores the God who made them, and whose law
Upholds them in Eternity or Time—
Greatest and least, ineffably sublime.

TO A FRIEND AFRAID OF CRITICS.

AFRAID of critics ! an unworthy fear :
Great minds must learn their greatness and be bold.
Walk on thy way ; bring forth thine own true thought ;
Love thy high calling only for itself,
And find in working recompense for work,
And Envy's shaft shall whiz at thee in vain.
Despise not censure. Weigh if it be just,
And if it be—amend, whate'er the thought
Of him who cast it. Take the wise man's praise
And love thyself the more that thou couldst earn
Meed so exalted ; but the blame of fools
Let it blow over like an idle whiff
Of poisonous tobacco in the streets,
Invasive of thy unoffending nose.
Their praise no better, only more perfumed.

The Critics—let me paint them as they are.
Some few I know, and love them from my soul ;
Polished, acute, deep read ; of inborn taste
Cultured into a virtue ; full of pith

And kindly vigour ; having won their spurs
In the great rivalry of friendly mind,
And generous to others, though unknown,
Who would, having a thought, let all men know
The new discovery. But these are rare ;
And if thou find one, take him to thy heart,
And think his unbought praise both palm and crown,
A thing worth living for, were nought beside.

If to be famous be thy sole intent,
And greatness be a mark beyond thy reach,
Manage the critics, and thou 'lt win the game ;
But fear them not, if thou art true thyself,
And look for fame, *now*, if the wise approve,
Or, from a wiser jury yet unborn.
The Poetaster may be harmed enough,
But Criticasters cannot crush a Bard.

One, if thou 'rt great, will cite from thy new book
The tamest passage : something that thy soul
Revolts at, now the inspiration 's o'er,
And would give all thou hast to blot from print
And sink into oblivion ; and will vaunt
The thing as beautiful—transcendant—rare—
The best thing thou hast done. Another friend,
With finer sense, will praise thy greatest thought,
Yet cavil at it ; putting in his "*but*s"
And "*yets*," and little obvious hints

That though 'tis good, the critic could have made
A work superior in its every part.
Another, in a pert and savage mood,
Without a reason, will condemn thee quite,
And strive to quench thee in a paragraph.
Another, with dishonest waggery,
Will twist, misquote, and utterly pervert
Thy thought and words ; and hug himself meanwhile
In the delusion, pleasant to his soul,
That thou art crushed, and he a gentleman.

Another, with a specious fair pretence,
Immaculately wise, will skim thy book,
And, self-sufficient, from his desk look down
With undisguised contempt on thee and thine ;
And sneer and snarl thee from his weekly court,
From an idea, spawn of his conceit,
That the best means to gain a great renown
For wisdom, is to sneer at all the world,
With strong denial that a good exists ;—
That all is bad, imperfect, feeble, stale,
Except this critic who outshines mankind.

Another, with a foolish zeal, will prate
Of thy great excellence ; and on thy head
Heap epithet on epithet of praise
In terms preposterous, that thou wilt blush
To be so smothered with such fulsome lies.

Another, calmer, with laudations thin,
Unsavoury and weak, will make it seem
That his good nature, not thy merit, prompts
The baseless adulation of his pen.
Another with a bull-dog's bark, will bay
Foul names against thee for some fancied slight
That thou ne'er dreamed of, and will damn thy work
For spite against the worker ; while the next
Who thinks thy faith or politics a crime,
Will bray displeasure from his monthly stall,
And prove thee dunce, that disagreeest with him ;

And, last of all, some solemn sage, whose nod
Trimestrial, awes a world of little wits,
Will carefully avoid to name thy name,
Although thy words are in the mouths of men
And thy ideas in their inmost hearts
Moulding events, and fashioning thy time
To nobler efforts.—Little matters it :
Whate'er thou art, thy value will appear.
If thou art bad, no praise will buoy thee up ;
If thou art good, no censure weigh thee down,
Nor silence nor neglect prevent thy fame.
So fear not thou the critics ! Speak thy thought ;
And, if thou 'rt worthy, in the people's love
Thy name shall live, while lasts thy mother tongue.

A WINTER-NIGHT'S PHANTASMAGORIA.

SAID I to my Fancy, "Go, wandering sprite,
And sail on the winds of this chill winter night;
The earth is before thee, thy pinions are free,
And wild as thou art there is earnest in Thee!—
Go forth! and returning with Truth for thy guide
Recount me the ills thou hast seen on thy ride;
The pain, the misfortune, the sorrow, the wrong,
The woes of the weak, and the guilt of the strong;
That Hope may take courage through all that's endured,
And whisper to Reason how much may be cured."

And Fancy untrammell'd went forth on her way
To an army encamped, and awaiting the day:—
The soldier was dreaming of home's distant shore,
And the friends that, alas! he might visit no more,
Of the little ones lisping that came to his call,
And the wife of his bosom—oh, dearer than all!
But short was his sleep: ere the morn's latest star
Was dimmed in the light of the dawning afar,
He heard the alarum beat loud on the drum,
And a low sudden cry that the foeman had come.

They armed at the summons, each man at his post ;
The watchword of battle flew fast through the host ;
The trumpets loud sounded ; the war-horses neighed
As the squadrons came rushing with banners displayed ;
And, long ere the noon, on that moist battle plain
The green sod was red with the blood of the slain ;
And the glory, that dazzled all eyes like the sun,
Was bought by the many, and given to one ;
And Fancy was pained for those multitudes blind,
And wept for the folly and sin of mankind :—
But Reason exclaimed, “Be of cheer, stricken soul,
Though strife be the race, and dominion the goal,
Not ever shall nations be victims of war,
Not ever shall men be the fools that they are.”

Next, borne on the winds that were drifting the snow,
Went Fancy careering, and dreaming of woe ;
And she came to a mansion, scant-window'd, high-wall'd,
Where a thin-visaged cold-hearted LAW sat install'd—
The Palace of Paupery, naked and bare,
And she saw a poor vagrant unhoused in the air ;
He was sickly and feeble, and famished, and old,
And his thin tattered garments flapped loose in the cold,
And, timidly knocking, he asked with a sigh
For a pallet of straw to lie down on and die :—
“We are full,” said a voice ; “we have room for no more !
Thou ’rt not of our parish ; begone from the door !”
And the pauper, scarce able to crawl from the gate,
Lay down with a groan and prepared for his fate.

But close within sight was a lordly abode—
Its windows, lit up, cast a gleam o'er the road ;
He heard the loud laughter, the shouts, and the din
As the wine-cups were drained and replenished within,
The bacchanal chants that the revellers sung,
The soft sadder lays of the loving and young,
And, high over all, the inspiring strain
That called up the dancers again and again ;
And Fancy beheld his vain efforts to rise
As he turned to the mansion his pitiful eyes,
And heard his last moan as despairing of aid
He gathered his tatters around him and prayed—
His last feeble sigh as he died by the door,
In sight of the aid that he could not implore ;
And she wept for the cruelty wrought upon plan,
And the heart-petrification of overfed man :—
But Hope, still undaunted, exclaimed, “ Be of cheer :
Not ever shall Wealth make humanity sear ;
Not ever shall Famine slay under the sun,
Where all might have plenty if justice were done ;
Nor Law give the pauper, defrauding its trust,
A coffin of planks with more joy than a crust.”

Again Fancy travelled away on the blast,
Till she came to a city imperial and vast,
With its domes and its temples and spires rising high,
Dim seen through the darkness that shrouded the sky.
The starlight looked down on its myriad abodes,
And the long line of lamps glittered far on the roads

Like the crown of the city embossed and impearled,
As she sat on her throne to give laws to the world :
And there, at a corner that swarmed with a crowd
Of squalor and raggedness shouting aloud,
She entered a tenement flaring with light,
And saw a degraded disheartening sight ;
The young and the aged, the sick and the well,
The child and the mother, with antic and yell
And laughter most horrid, and screeching, and din,
Destroying their souls and their bodies with gin ;
Imbibing the frenzy, in draught after draught,
And loving it better the more that they quaff'd ;
And one, a young creature, still fair as a dream,
Rushed out through the dark to a bridge o'er a stream—
Her eye bright with madness, her cheek pale with woe—
And paced by the parapet sadly and slow ;
Then stopped to look down on the dark-flowing tide
Where others before her heart-broken had died,
And wrung her hands wildly, and muttered the name .
Of one who had robbed her of virtue and fame ;—
And sprung with a shriek to the coping of stone,
And plunged in the waters, unheeded, unknown—
One splash in the wave, and the struggle was o'er ;
And Fancy, lamenting, remained to deplore.

Morn rose o'er the city ; the domes and the spires
Were bright in the sunshine ; the smoke of the fires
Curled upwards, dispersing in wreathlets of grey ;
Sound followed on sound ; and the tumult of day

Swelled louder and louder ; a trampling of feet
And a rumbling of chariots and cars in the street,
A clanking of hammers, a ringing of bells,
And a low stifled sound like the sea when it swells,
And thousands of noises—all, mingling like one,
Proclaimed that the million were up with the sun.
And Fancy was off again, pressing along
Through thoroughfares dense with a gathering throng—
So dense it appeared, as some festival-day
Had called forth the people to loiter and play ;
And lo, in the midst of the city she saw
That a man was about to be slain by the Law.
The huge gloomy prison stood frowning and high ;
The gallows was ready ; the hangman was by ;
The victim was praying ; the crowd, far and near,
Thronged window and balcony eager to hear,
And a sea of grim faces was surging below,
Ever roaring or jesting, or swayed to and fro
Like the boughs of a forest when tempests are strong,
And hissing impatient that time was so long
Ere the noose was prepared and the hanging began,
And Law was revenged by destroying a man.
And Fancy heart-sick turned away from the sight,
And weary of roaming, reposed from her flight :—
But Hope ever-cheerful exclaimed yet again,
“ The world shall grow better—thy flight is not vain ;
Intemperance shall not for ever destroy
The souls of the many—look up, there is Joy :—

And Law with his years, growing kindly and mild,
Shall act unto all as a sire to his child ;
And, banishing Vengeance for aye from his code,
Shall lead his poor wanderers back to the road ;
And, wiser than ever, shall make it a rule
To suffer no hangman to teach in his school ;
Be cheered then, oh Fancy, and soon thou shalt see
If Hope was a prophet in preaching to thee."

THE EARTH AND THE STARS.

SAID the Earth to the Stars, " Oh my sisters,
Fellow-travellers through this dread immensity,
Send a voice to my spirit and declare,
If, serenely as ye smile on me, and fair,
Ye are dwellings for all miseries, like me ?

" Oh tell me if in you, my glorious sisters,
Rules a tyrant like the one enthronèd here ?—
If Death has ever entered in your climes,
And Suffering, and Calamity, and Crimes
Ever rob you of the children that you rear ?

" Oh tell me if in you, my myriad sisters,
The weak are ever trampled by the strong ?—
If Malice, and Intolerance, and Hate,
And Warfare, and Ambition to be great,
Ever cause the right to suffer from the wrong ?

" Oh tell me, silent sisters, are ye happy ?—
Are the multitudes that live beneath your skies,
Full of knowledge, unaccursed by such a ban
As man has ever issued against man ;
Are they happy, are they loving, are they wise ? "

Said the Stars to the Earth—"Oh mournful sister,
Rolling calmly through the calm infinity,
We have rolled for countless ages on our track,
Ever onward—pressing onward—never back ;—
There is progress both for us and for thee.

"There is neither standing still nor retrogression
In the laws of Eternal governance ;
And Death itself, which prompts thee to repine,
Is no evil unto thee nor unto thine,
But a step from good to better ; an advance.

"Thou wilt make, oh thou foolish little sister,
The full cycle of thy glory, in thy time ;
We are rolling on in ours for evermore ;—
Look not backward—see Eternity before,
And free thyself of Sorrow and of Crime.

"God who made thee, never meant thee, mournful sister,
To be filled with sin and grief eternally ;
And the children that are born upon thy breast
Shall, in fulness of their Destiny, be blest :—
There is Progress for the Stars, and for Thee."

THE YOUNG EARTH.

“The earth gives signs of age, disease, and fickleness. It yields its increase grudgingly, and demands an exorbitant fee beforehand, in toil and sweat from the husbandman. It has ill turns, or paroxysms, when it rouses the ocean into a tempest, and makes sport of navies, strewing the shore with the wrecks and carcases of men. It rocks a continent or sinks an island; shaking massive cities into countless fragments, and burying its wretched inhabitants in indiscriminate ruin; anon it writhes and groans in mortal agony, and finds relief only by disgorging its fiery bowels, burying cities and villages in burning graves. THE EARTH IS OLD AND FEEBLE, and must needs groan on until it renews its prime.”—*Miseries and Liabilities of the Present Life.*

OLD Earth ? YOUNG EARTH !—though myriad years,
Since Time’s primeval morn,
She may have flourished ’mid the spheres
Before a man was born.

Still young : though race succeeding race
Have trod her breast sublime,
And flourished in their pride of place
Their full allotted time,—

Then passed away, like daily things,
Nor left a trace behind
To tell how many thousand Springs
They lived before mankind.

We, who for three-score years and ten
Toil deathwards from our birth,
Deem sixty centuries of men
A ripe old age for Earth.

But all our deeds, though back we look
With yearning keen and fond,
Fill but a page ; the mighty book
Lies fathomless beyond.

She is not old, nor waxing cold,
But vigorous as of yore
Amid her kindred globes she rolled,
Exulting evermore.

Six thousand years of human strife
Are little in the sum ;
A morning added to her life,
And noonday yet to come.

Six thousand years !—what have *they* brought,
O poor ephemeral man ?
Go, reckon centuries by thought—
Thou 'lt find them but a span.

Go, reckon time by progress made—
And lo, what ages pass,
Swift as the transitory shade
Of clouds upon the grass.

Six thousand years ! and what are they ?

A cycle scarce begun—

A fragment of a grander day

Unmeasured by the sun ;

Too short to purify the sight

Of souls in Error blind—

Too short to show the healing light

Of Love to all mankind.

For, lo ! the lesson has been read

In every clime and tongue ;

The Sea has breathed it from her bed,

And Earth and Air have sung—

The Sun has beamed it from above

To all his worlds around ;

The Stars have preached that God was Love :—

What answer have we found ?

The generations, cold and dark,

Have lived and passed away,

And never caught the faintest spark

Of Love's eternal ray.

The myriads, seeking to create

An idol to adore,

Have made their God a God of Hate,

And worshipped him with gore.

And living multitudes have heard
That love is Nature's plan,
Yet shut their souls against the word
That teaches love to man.

But there is Progress in the spheres,
The glorious Earth is young ;
The seed has lain six thousand years,
The tender shoots have sprung.

She is not old, but young and fair,
And marching to her prime :
Her teeming bosom yet shall bear
The harvest of her time.

And generations—thought-endued—
Each wiser than the last,
Shall crowd, in one short year, the good
Of centuries of the past :

Shall, living, aid by loving deeds
The truths for which we pine,
And, dying, sow the fruitful seeds
Of progress more divine.

The struggle long and sorely fought—
Embittered as it spread—
For simplest rights—free hand, free thought,
And sustenance of bread :

The struggle of the righteous weak
Against th' unrighteous strong—
Of Justice firm, though mild and meek,
Against oppressive Wrong—

Draws in, and must be ended yet—
It ripens to its hour :
The mighty combatants have met ;
And Truth has challenged Power.

Young Earth !—her sad six thousand years
Now passing swift away,
Are but her infancy of tears—
The dawn before the day.

FREEDOM AND LAW.

WILDEST wind that shakes the blossoms,
Or on ocean chafes and swells,
Blows not uncontrolled and wanton,
But as LAW compels.
Streams that wander and meander,
Loitering in the meads to play,
Or that burst in roaring torrents
Into foam and spray ;
Avalanches, forest-crushing,
Fires that rage in Etna's breast,
Lava floods and tides of ocean,
All obey the same behest.
Law releases, Law restrains them :—
Lo ! the Moon, her forehead bent
Earthward, makes her revolution.
Docile, beauteous, and content ;
Lo ! the Earth her mighty mistress,
In her own appointed place,
Yields, like her, sublime obedience
To the Law that governs space ;
And the godlike sun, exhaling
Light and Life from every pore,

On his axis, law-directed,
Wheels majestic evermore ;
Bearing with him to Orion
All the worlds that round him shine,
To complete the awful cycle
Of a destiny divine.
While the Stars and Constellations
Glowing in eternal light,
Teach the majesty of Order,
And that LAW is Infinite.
Is the immortal spirit freer,
Mated with its mortal clod ?
Lo ! it soars, and faith-supported,
Claims affinity with God ;
Proudly it disdains the shackles
Of the frame to which it clings,
And would fly to heights celestial,
On angelic wings :
But the hand of LAW restrains it ;
Narrow is the widest span,
Measured by the deeds or efforts
Of the aspiring soul of man.
Like the imprisoned lark, that carols
To salute the dawning day,
It can see the sky, and gather
Hope and rapture from its ray ;
It can see the waving branches
Of its long-lost happy bowers,

It can feel the heavenly breezes,
And the scent of meadow flowers ;
But if it would strive to reach them,
It is doomed to fruitless pain,
And with bleeding bosom struggles
At its prison-doors in vain.

If the mind be less entrammell'd,
And is freed from sensual bound ;
Still the LAW restrains and moulds it,
And attracts it to the ground :—
Like the young rejoicing Eaglet,
Knowing nought of gyves and bars,
It may imp its virgin pinions,
By a flight towards the stars ;—
High above the sterile Andes,
Or the Himalayan snow,
Breasting ether, robed in sunlight,
Unimpeded it may go,
But a Law has placed its limits,
And to pass them should it dare,
Numbness falls upon its pinions,
Death o'ercanopies the air.

Such thy fate, terrestrial spirit,
Such thy freedom ;—thou may'st soar
To the empyrean summits,
Where no mortal breathed before ;

But Infinitude surrounds thee ;
Nature stays thee in thy flight ;
Thou must turn thee, or be stricken
Powerless on thy topmost height.
Thou must travel lower, lower,—
Nearer to the earthly mould—
Safer for thee—there to fashion
New ideas out of old :
There to judge of the unfathom'd
By the things within thy ken,
Of the ways of God Eternal,
By the futile ways of men.
Yet, oh soul ! there's Freedom for thee ;
Thou mayst win it ;—not below ;—
Not on earth with mortal vesture,
Where to love, to feel, to know,
Is to suffer ; but unfetter'd,
Thou mayst spring to riper life,
Purified from Hate and Evil,
And Mortality and Strife.
Death is gaoler ; he'll release thee ;
Through his portals thou shalt see
The Perfection that awaits thee,
If thou'rt worthy to be free :—
Be thou meek, to exaltation—
Death shall give thee wings to soar ;
Loving God, and knowing all things,
Upwards springing evermore.

TRUTH AND ERROR.

GREAT is the power of Truth ; but greater far
The power of Error. Sum their victories up,
Count o'er their conquests since the earth began
To keep a record of its own misdeeds,
And balance them with virtues, we shall see
Which of the two is mightier conqueror
And fills the greater volume.—Easy task :
When every history tells the same sad tale,
And for one page of happiness and right,
Presents a thousand of despair and wrong.

Truth's victories are slow. Those who begin
The glorious battle in her dear behalf
Die off—despairing, some ; and hapless, all—
And leave the harsh inheritance of strife
To those who love them, and to times remote
The dearly-bought and tardy-paced success.
They sow, but reap not, nor their sons, nor grandsons ;
But strangers to them garner up their fruits,
Oft-times not knowing even the saintly names
Of those who struggled for a thankless world.

But Error's victories are sooner won,
Who fights for her, fights for an easy spoil,
With willing soldiers, valiant in the cause,
And gains the battle, oft without a scratch ;
For Error crowns her generals ere they die,
And blazons in men's ears with blatant voice
Their bloodiest deeds, until the foolish world
Exalts them—first to heroes, then to gods,
And swears for ever after by their names.

But blessings on the Truth, it prospers still.
And Error though it lives luxuriantly,
Lives fast, and grows decrepit, and expires,
To be succeeded by its progeny.
But Truth ne'er dies. Once let the seed be sown,
No blight can kill it : neither winds nor rain,
Nor lightnings, nor all wrath of elements,
Can e'er uproot it from the hungry soil.

Error has had her triumphs in the past :
Truth's are to come. In ages far remote
Her light was feeble as a glow-worm's lamp ;
But fed by noble thoughts and valiant deeds,
Fanned by the aspirations of the wise,
Tended by virtuous hearts with patient care,
'Mid cold, and darkness, and tempestuous wrong.
Rose higher, and glowed clearer, until now—
When, like a beacon on a mountain-top,
Seen of the nations, it illumines the world.

Truth was a snow-flake on a precipice
In the far-off cold summits of the past,
Which fell : and, falling, gathered strength and bulk
To fall again more heavily, and roll
Adown the slope of Time. 'Tis rolling now,
Huge as an avalanche ; and in the air,
The whizzing, and the roaring, and the crash
Of its great progress may be heard afar.

SOLITARY LOFTINESS.

I WOULD not be a Bird to wing my flight
High as the summit of the Himalays ;
I would not see the cold disrobèd sun
"Shorn of his beams," that permeate the world
And make it beautiful : but, with a scope
Of vision less remote, a power of flight
Less lofty, more divine, I would but soar
To those serene accessible mountain-tops
Where earth's pure atmosphere might hem me round.
And sunshine might be warmth and glory still.

TO IMPATIENT GENIUS.

PAINTER that with soul-creations
Wouldst attain th' applause of nations ;
And deserve a name of glory
To be writ in future story ;

Work thy way.

Live with Nature, love her truly,
Wisely, wholly :—and so duly

Bide thy day.

With high thoughts thy mind adorning,
Heed no critic's shallow scorning,

Nor at yelping curs repine :

Every light must cast a shadow,

So must thine.

Sculptor, with ambition glowing,
Steep thyself to overflowing

In the majesty and greatness,

Strength, and beauty, and sedateness

Of th' antique :

But forget not living Nature,
Heavenly in its form and feature,
For the Greek.
Beauty is renewed for ever :—
Let its love support endeavour,
Though neglect enwrap thee now—
Work :—and men will find a laurel
For thy brow.

Poet, singing in the earnest
Love and Hope with which thou burnest,
And upon a lofty summit
Sounding Nature, with the plummet
Of thy song :
Grieve not if thy voice be chidden,
And thy tuneful lustre hidden
Under wrong.
Scorn not Fame, but rise above it ;
Truth rewards the minds that love it ;
Like the planets shine and sing ;—
Noontide follows every morning,—
Summer, spring.

One and all, be up and doing ;
Glory needs incessant wooing ;
And if Faith—not mere ambition,
Prompts you to fulfil your mission,
You shall rise :

But the acorn, small and flower-like,
Must have time to flourish bower-like
 To the skies.

Bide you yours :—of wealth not lustful ;
Ever patient, calm, and trustful :—

 Years shall magnify your bole,
And produce immortal foliage
 Of the soul.

UNA FATA MORGANA;
OR,
A VISION OF "WHAT MIGHT BE."

WEARY and sickening of the dull debate,
And clang of politics ; weary of hate
Toss'd at our heads from o'er the Atlantic main,
With foolish speeches ; weary of the pain
And sorrow, and calamity, and crime
Of daily history told us in our time ;
Weary of wrong that reared its hydra head,
And hiss'd from all its mouths ; dispirited
With rich man's apathy to poor men's hurt,
And poor men's ignorance of their own desert,
And for a moment hopeless of mankind
And that great cause, the nearest to my mind,
Progress—the dream of poet and of sage—
I lean'd back in my chair, and dropped the page
Diurnal, filled with all the misery,
And fell asleep ; if sleeping it could be,
When, in their natural sequence in the brain,
Thought followed thought, more palpable and plain

Than when I waked ; when words took music's voice,
And all my being inly did rejoice.
And what I saw, I sang of at the time,
With ease unparalleled by waking rhyme,
And to this tune, which, many a day, since then
A haunting music has come back again.

Oh the golden city,
Shining far away !—
With its domes and steeples tall
And the sunlight over all ;
With the waters of a bay
Rippling gently at its feet,
Dotted over with a fleet ;
Oh the golden city—so beautiful to see !—
It shall open wide its portals,
And I'll tell you if it be
The city of the happy,
The city of the free.

Oh the glorious city,
Shining far away !—
In its boundaries every man
Makes his happiness a plan,
That he studies night and day,
Till he thinks it, not alone
Like his property, his own :

Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—

But spreads it round about him,

Till all are blessed as he ;

His mind an inward sunshine,

And bright eternally.

Oh the splendid city,

Gleaming far away !—

Every man by Love possess'd,

Has a priest within his breast,

And, whene'er he kneels to pray,

Never breathes a thought unkind

Against men of other mind :

Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—

But knows that God Eternal

Will shower all blessings free,

On hearts that live to love Him,

And cling to Charity.

Oh the gorgeous city,

Shining far away !—

Where a Competence is bliss,

And each man that lives has this

For his labour of the day ;

A labour not too hard,

And a bountiful reward :

Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—

Where mighty wheels creative
Revolve incessantly,
And Science gains to cheer him,
A daily Victory.

Oh the glorious city,
Shining far away !—
Neither Misery nor Crime,
Nor the wrongs of ancient Time,
Nor the Kingly lust of sway
Ever come within its wall,
To degrade or to enthral :
Oh the glorious city—so beautiful to see !—
But Peace, and Love, and Knowledge,
The civilizing Three,
Still prove by GOOD that has been,
The BETTER that may be.

This dream'd I, to this rhythm, or something near,
But far more copious, musical, and clear ;
And when I wakened, still my fancy ran
'Twas not *all* dream ; and that large Hopes for man
Were not such idle visions as the wise,
In days like ours, should heedlessly despise :
I thought that Love might be Religion yet,
Not form alone, but soul and substance met ;
The guide, the light, the glory of the mind,
Th' electric link uniting all mankind ;

That if men loved, and made their Love the Law,
All else would follow :—more than ever saw
Poet or Prophet in the utmost light
Of heavenly glory opening on his sight.
But dream, or no dream, take it as it came :
It gave *me* Hope,—it may give *you* the same.
And as bright Hopes make the Intention strong,
Take heart with me, and muse upon my song.



THE ENGLISH PEEP-O'-DAY-BOYS.

Know ye not the Peep-o'-day-boys?—

Bound, both heart and hand,
To do something worth the doing
For our English land?—

Though no rebels and no traitors,

Yet a plot we 've laid :

English hearts, we pray you give it
Countenance and aid ;

And the watchword, if you 'll join us,

You shall learn anon :—

Hear it—learn it—think upon it :—

“ On—for ever on ! ”

Sanguine are the Peep-o'-day-boys :—

Solemn league we 've sworn,

That we 'll fight a strenuous battle


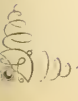
For each child that 's born ;

And maintain with growing fervour

Its inherent right,

Not to bread and raiment only,

But to mental light—



To the food of Education,
To be kept from none :—
Join the phalanx, shouting with us,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

And we hopeful Peep-o'-day-boys,
Shamed by Vice and Crime,
Think we'll manage to reform them :
Only give us time.
And as Ignorance is mother
Of the teeming brood,
We have vow'd to cease no effort
Till she is subdued :—
Sturdy war we'll make against her,
Till her strength is gone :—
Aid us ; and repeat the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Other plots we Peep-o'-day-boys,
Hour by hour, advance ;
And such hatred have we taken
To Intemperance,
As the plague-spot of the people—
Poisoning brain and heart,
That we've sworn to struggle with it
On the People's part,

And already gain'd some triumphs
And a benison :—
Join our league ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Then we think the hangman's office
Ought not to endure :
Cruel quacks are not our Doctors—
Killing 's not our cure.
And 'tis portion of our compact,
Sworn with earnest faith,
That we 'll make a sinecurist
Of this man of death—
Both his trade and his example
Out of date are gone.
Aid the plot ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

And we active Peep-o'-day-boys,
Busy as we are,
Still have time to pick a quarrel
With the demon War.
Many a plot we form to thwart him :—
And success though slow
Shall at last reward our efforts,
And we 'll smite him low—

Late or early we shall vanquish
This Apollyon :—
Join us—aid us—pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

Now you know the Peep-o'-day-boys ;
And they are 'not few :—
Over all the land you 'll find them
Zealous, firm, and true,
Never wearying in the struggle,
Lagging ne'er a jot :
Friend or foe, you 're pledged to join us.
Now you 're in the plot ;
You 're the master of our secret—
Power of choice is gone :—
Take the vows ; and pass the watchword,
“ *On—for ever on !* ”

THE DEPOSITION OF KING CLOG.

KING CLOG was a mighty monarch,
He sat on his lofty seat,
 With his golden crown,
 And his ermine-down,
And his courtiers at his feet.
His power seemed firm as the mountains—
Inert but strong was he ;
 And he ruled the land
 With a heavy hand
And a placid tyranny.
And whenever a boon was asked him,
He stared with a calm amaze,
And said, “ Ye foolish people,
 Ye must stand on the ancient ways.”

And long o'er the suffering nations,
King CLOG and his courtiers ruled,

And men half wise,
Who could use their eyes,
And were taught, and trained, and school'd,
Conceived this ponderous monarch
Was bountiful, wise, and good ;
And held it just
To kneel in the dust,
And smear him with gratitude.
And whenever the people murmured,
The king and his statesmen frown'd,
But stoutly refused to aid them ;
And so the world went round.

He was a drowsy monarch,
They were a drowsy crew,
And from hour to hour,
In their pride of power,
Duller and drowsier grew :
But a cry for reformation,
Which rose for evermore,
Disturbed their sleep
With its mutterings deep,
And stirr'd them to the core :
“ We will not change,” said the courtiers,
“ For change is ever an ill,
We ’ll crush these restless people,
If we cannot keep them still.”

But CLOG, like all things mortal,
Declined as he grew old,
He loved to doze
In warm repose,
High on his throne of gold.
And the people saw his weakness,
And shouted in his ear,
“We’ve groaned too long.
In sorrow and wrong:
Awake ! let the right appear.”
And the king, with eyes half-opened
A lingering answer sent :—
“Let me alone, ye rabble—
And toil—and be content.”
“We’re weary of our bondage;”
Said they, “Oh, king, be just ;—
We delve and spin,
But cannot win
Our raiment and our crust ;
We ask no boon from favour,
That Justice should not give ;
From cradle to grave
We groan and slave,
And die that we may live.”
But CLOG replied, hard-hearted.
“Your sires were wise as you ;
They never complained ; poor wretches,
You know not what ye do.”

But still the people clamour'd,
And the cry o'er the nation spread—
 " Freedom of speech,
 Freedom to teach,
 Freedom to earn our bread ;
These must we have, O monarch !
 Whether you will or no ;—
 Too long we 've pined,
 Body and mind,
 In ignorance and woe."
" Let me alone, I pray you,"
Said CLOG, " nor vex my soul ;
As the world has roll'd for ages,
So must it ever roll."

And he folded his arms on his bosom,
And slept, and never heard
 The measured beat
 Of the trampling feet,
And the oft-repeated word
That came from the solemn conclave
 Of the people, met to plan
 Some better laws
 To aid the cause
 Of the happiness of man :
Nor the voices loud resounding
 Like waves upon the shore,
That proclaimed to the listening nations
 That CLOG should rule no more.

But JOG, the next successor,
Who understood his time,
Stepped on the throne :—
“ Father, begone—
To linger is a crime.
Go to thy bed and slumber,
And leave the world to me ;
Thy mission's done—
Thy race is run—
I 'm ruler of the free.”
So CLOG retired, obedient—
And JOG his son was crown'd.
We hope he 'll govern better :—
And so the world goes round.

THE CLAIRVOYANTE.

PART I.

THE INNER.

MASTER of my soul ! I hear thee,
And obey thee, as I must ;
And will look as thou commandest
Through the secrets of this dust,
Into spirit ; and lay bare
All I suffer, all I dare,
All the inner strength and weakness,
All the earthly and divine ;
All the baseness, all the grandeur,
Of this soaring soul of mine.
'Tis an effort I would shrink from
If permitted ; for the sun
Of my faults and imperfections
Is so great ; I would be dumb
On its greatness, and conceal
That which pains me to reveal.

Still it boots not ; and so inward
Turning these soul-eyes I look
O'er the blotted page of conscience.
And peruse it, like a book ;
Fair and clear, it might have glitter'd
Had I will'd to keep it pure ;
Had I learned to know its value,
And with patience to endure
All the suffering and wrong,
Sent to teach it to be strong.

In a robe of heavenly splendour,
Girt with glory, like a flame,
Germ itself of greater glory,
To this world my spirit came.
Mated for its good with Matter
As the seed is with the ground ;
Mated, but to tower superior,
And to spread its leaves around.
From the leaves to form the blossom,
From the blossom flowers and fruit :
But, alas ! by evil training,
It was blighted from the root.

Oh, my spirit ! self-degraded—
Flame unfed—imprison'd ray—
Germ prevented of thy vigour
By perverseness of the clay ;

Good was Infinite before thee ;
Knowledge, Happiness, and Power,
All were thine if thou hadst will'd them ;
And predestined for thy dower,
If thou hadst but seen the greatness,
That self-culture would have given :—
Spark earth-kindled, ever tending
To expand thyself in heaven—
But by Prejudice and Habit
Clogg'd and wearied in thy flight ;
Turned from radiancy of knowledge
Into dulness, dark as night.

Wretched Spirit ! sin betrammell'd,
Wretched, wretched, to have bent
Thy flame Nature from the circles
Of the upper element ;
And sunk downwards, basely grovelling,
Till thy sight grew weak and dim,
And thou couldst no longer listen
To the chaunt of Cherubim :
And of earth, most earthly essence,
Shrunk from the Eternal Presence,
Half extinguished in the mists,
By false reasoning dogmatists,
Who pretending they could teach,
Blighted thee with freezing speech.

Evil wert thou : evil art thou—
Fill'd with jealousies and spites,
Fill'd with malices and hatreds,
And with low and mean delights.
Girdled round with superstitions,
Contradictory and vile ;
Manacled and gyved in error,
And impermeate with guile.
God became a god of Hatred,
Goodness but a line effaced,
Light itself a lowering darkness,
Man a creature most debased :
And thyself, thyself degrading
To the level of thy thought,
Wert a weak and puling bigot
With dejection over-fraught,
'Till thou look'dst for consolation
To the paltry joys of clay,
Sacrificing all thy Future
To the meanness of To-day.

Yet, oh soul ! thou art immortal,
And hast glimpses fair and bright,
Of the heavenliness of duty,
And the mild undying beauty
That would girdle thee with light
If thou wouldst but cultivate
Love instead of Guile and Hate—

Love for God who made thee great—
Love and Knowledge ;—and for ever,
With sincereness of endeavour,
Cast away the misconceptions
Of false teachers of a faith
Dinn'd, and pray'd, and preach'd into thee,
Till thy life grew mental death.

Hast thou courage ? No, thou hast not,
Craven soul ! thou dar'st not think—
Thou 'rt afraid that Truth might guide thee
To a precipice's brink ;
Thou 'rt afraid to follow boldly
In the path thou hast begun ;
And thou fearest Doubt might lead thee
To convictions thou wouldst shun.
Paltry coward ! base, dishonest
Trifler with a holy thing !
Lov'st thou Truth, yet fear'st to seek it ?—
Poor designless wanderling !
Lov'st thou Truths ? and dost imagine
That one Truth can disagree,
Or misfit with Truth superior ?—
If thou dost, there 's none in thee :
Thou art filled with Guile and Falsehood—
Look around thee, Spirit mine ;
Cast away the bonds of Error ;
Mount and soar ; and be divine.

PART II.

THE OUTER.

TAKE, Oh take them from my sight—

All these people ! Why should they
Stand between me and the light ?

If thou wilt not, prithee lay
Gently on mine eyes thy fingers,
That, beyond them, touch'd by thee,
My rapt spirit, unencumber'd,
To the stars may journey free.

Wilt thou not ? and must I look,

Through them, right into their souls ?
Must I read, as from a book,

All their thoughts ? No. Darkness rolls
O'er their spirits—o'er my own ;

On my senses let it creep :
I am weary of their presence,—

Weary, weary,—let me sleep.
Must I waken ?—Strong thy will is :

Unrepining I endure,
Yielding full obedience to thee,
Rich in that, however poor.

This man ? ay, his look is meek ;
Virtue seems to flush his cheek.

'Tis but seeming : well, what then ?
He is eaten up with pride ;
And the passion he can hide
From the scrutiny of men,
Would affright them if they saw it
Half as well as I can see :
Sanctity's a long loose garment
For the mind's deformity :
Well it hides—and snugly covers—
Many a folly, vice, and sin ;
And the heart that pulses calmly
May have black, black blood within.

This man too ?—so old and hoary,—
Creeping, crawling, cringing wretch !—
He would sell his father's bones,
By the pound, for what they'd fetch.
Slave to gold, for gold he'd barter
Anything but men's applause ;
That alone of value to him
For the custom that it draws.

This one ? she's a pleasant lady,
Rouged and powder'd with deceit ;
Foolish, though she looks so wise,
But in folly too discreet

To display the pilfer'd patchwork
Of her mind in all men's sight :
Heartless, witless, soulless cypher !—

But a somebody in right
Of the rents her husband left her
And her mild religious face,
And her punctual Sunday visits
To her pew in public place,
And the daily largess given
With a free unsparing hand,
If, to please the gentle donor,
It is blazon'd through the land.

Lo ! another ! He 's a teacher—
Messenger of God to men,
One that lifts his voice of thunder,
Till the rafters ring again ;—
Preaching peace with warlike meanings,
Humbleness with scorn innate,
Mercy while he thinks of vengeance,
Love while he is fill'd with Hate.
Holy teacher ! *I* can see him,
Know him, judge him, weigh him well,
For a hair's breadth of opinion
Sentencing the world to hell.
Quite convinced that in his sect
Is all Truth, and there alone :
And that all his people's truth,
Is but shadow of his own.

Let him learn his lesson better,
And have faith in humankind,
Charity, if he would lodge it,
Would not prey upon his mind :
Would not poison Gospel milk
With the gall his words instil,
Bad as earth is, good would flourish,
If we 'd grow it like the ill.

Who is next ?—ay—'tis the sage,
Great philosopher in seeming,
Wonder of a shallow age,
Ever jabbering and dreaming :
Full of cold hard facts and figures,
Soft to him as potter's clay,
Wherewithal to build a structure
For the uses of the day,
Poor philosopher ! to think
Man but made to eat and drink,
To be clothed and housed, and fed
And well buried when he 's dead.
He Philosopher ?—Ah, no !—
Wisdom dwells with higher things,
Than the mere material carcase,
And its common wires and springs ;
Far beyond his narrow vision
It is privileged to soar,
And while reconciled to reason
Must transcend it evermore.

This man, too, aspires to wisdom.—
He's a legislator born,
A disciple in a science
Sprung of selfishness and scorn ;
That considers Earth too scanty,
For its people ; and would treat,
Every poor man as a foe-man,
If the wretch made bold to eat—
Vilest culprit, if he married,
Till his corn and wine were sure.—
Life itself a shameful error
In the children of the poor.
Selfish bigot, look around thee,
Nor with fallacy so blind
Cast a blight upon the spirits
Of the mothers of mankind.
Half the surplus, thou possessest,
After all thy needs are fed,
Would supply a score of mortals
Better than thyself with bread.
Earth is wide enough for all men
If division were but fair :
Heartless, shallow, greedy sophist,
Be contented with thy share.
Blame not Heaven for man's misdoing,
Nor with theories so sad
Deem the laws of genial Nature
Bad, because thy heart is bad.

Take these people from my presence,—

Let me see beyond—beyond !

Or, if not, oh let me slumber,

And not waken to despond !—

Thy commandment weighs upon me—

I am docile, and obey ;

But, when this is done, oh lead me—

Lead me to a brighter way !

Who are these that crowd around me ?

Ears of corn and blades of grass,

To and fro for ever swaying

As the light winds o'er them pass,

Are not more alike than these are—

One might form the mould for all.

They have minds, but scarcely know it ;

Their opinions rise or fall

As the breath of others blows them :

Christians they by chance of birth,

Neither very good nor evil—

Clods of animated earth :

Souls ? ay, they have souls—but small ones—

Small as germs—like germs to spring,

If there were a soil to feed on

And a sunshine ripening ;

But, alas for them ! they 've fallen

On Convention's barren mound,

Tended by such cultivation

As but rots them in the ground :

Types of countless generations
That have lived since earth began,
And have died without an effort
To increase the good of man,—
Heedless that the proper mission
Of each race upon the soil
Is to make the next a better,
By its wisdom and its toil ;—
Living, like inferior creatures,
But to propagate their kind,—
Sinking into death, nor leaving
Name, or fame, or thought behind.

Hast thou then released my spirit
From this thralldom ?—Let me go !
I will seek a fairer presence,
Far from human shame and woe :
Living in a shining trance,
Careless of deliverance :
Knowing and commingling well
With the indestructible
Spirit-life that hems me in,
Purifying me from sin.

PART III.

THE INFINITE PROGRESSION.

BACK to dawn of first remembrance ?

Long and darksome is the way :

Powerful master of my spirit,

Tell me how shall I obey ?

I am weak, and faint, and freezing,

Crawling on the ground in pain :

Weary—weary,

Dark and dreary :

With a weight upon my brain.

Hard and icy is the region,

And my blood is thin and slow :

I am living—I am dying—

Both in one, and both in woe.

I am fetter'd, limb by limb,

To a planet dull and dim—

To an orb of darkness dread,

Where to live is to be dead

To the Love, the Joy, the Light :—

Let me leave it ; let me quite

Burst my fetters ; let me soar

Nearer—nearer—evermore

Nearer to the glorious sun :—
Mount, my spirit ! we 've begun
Flight most long ; but what is Time
 To the Infinite, like thee,
Destined as thou art to climb
 Upwards to Eternity ?

Oh the sorrow ! where is this ?—
 To what prison have I come—
Cheerless, soundless, colourless,
 Hard and frozen, blank and dumb ?—
I am fetter'd to a body
 Galling to me ; and my blood,
If not stagnant altogether,
 Is a cold and sluggish flood.
All is dim before mine eyes ;
 And I fancy it would be
Sweet to close them, and to sleep,
In a slumber still and deep,
 Senseless to eternity.
Let me slumber—let me rest—
 God hath given me the desire :
And He surely knoweth best ;
 Let me sleep, my life 's a fire
Faintly burning ; feed it not,—
 In this world where hope is vain,
Where the sun is but a spot,
 And existence but a pain.

Were it not that these sweet moons,
Seven fair creatures in the sky,
And those rings so coldly bright,
Cheer'd me with a glimpse of light,
I would lay me down and die.
No more crawling, life oppress'd ;
I am weary, let me rest.

Praises ! Praises ! mightiest Praises !

What a weight has fallen away !

I am soaring !

And adoring !

And emerging into day !

But a numbness still enwraps me,

Though I see th' eternal sun.

Struggle, spirit !—struggle onwards !

Thy expansion has begun !

Thou canst see the glories round thee :

Thou canst turn thy thoughts above ;

Thou canst praise the God who made thee ;

Thou canst serve him with thy love.

Chill and gloomy as thou art,

Thou art warming in the ray ;

And though slow,

And full of woe,

Thou thy destined path must go,

Till thou shinest in the day.

Though thy sight is somewhat dull,

And thy life but sorrowful,

And thy years—long, painful years,
Thou art rising in the spheres ;
And canst worship and enjoy :

Lo ! the heavens are fair to view,
And the mountains, snow-envelop'd
Glitter, beautiful and blue,
With their sharp and jagged peaks,
High as if they meant to rise
To those two transcendant moons
Of the four that cheer the skies.
Patience ! Patience ! toiling spirit !

Thou art creature of a law ;—
Reconcile thee to thy prison,
Death, thy dungeon-gate shall draw
Wide, wide open : wait thy time :—
Every germ must feel the clod,
Darkness, cold and wet and storm :
Ere it sprout beyond the sod.
Thou hast pierced above the gloom ;
Feed thyself with sun and air ;
Germ and Leaf, and Bud and Bloom,
All are destined to thy share.

Weary, weary,
Dark and dreary,
I have linger'd sadly here,
Wearing out this mortal frame,
With the incessant toil that came,
Daily, from dull year to year.

But I die. I feel the spirit
Mounting, mounting, mounting still ;
Brighter visions burst upon me,
Joy with grief and good with ill.
Life is fuller—sight is clearer,
I am coming ever nearer
To the knowledge that I crave ;
Hail ! new planet ! still a prison
Girt and guarded by a grave :
But I know what lies before me—
Germ and leaf : your time is o'er,
Through those phases of existence,
I shall vegetate no more.
Here in sunlight—grown in stature—
In a world of light and life,
I awake to higher effort,
Warmer motion, fiercer strife.
Feeling still, the more I know,
Greater thirst, intenser woe,
That my knowledge is so small,
That I cannot fathom all.

Where have I been ?—my thoughts have wander'd—
Back through dim chaotic years ;
Methought I was in other worlds,
Journeying through the starry spheres.
And am I in the earth again ?
Take me firmly by the hand—

Press it :—touch me on the brow ;
Let me fully understand
I am here.—Ah, well I know,
It is called a world of woe :—
There are worse, could we remember
All that we have seen and done
In our progress from the outer
Utter coldness to the sun.

But again my senses swim,
And again my sight grows dim ;
And I seem to maze and whirl,
Like a leaflet in the vortex,
Where the fierce tornadoes curl.
All within grows calm and bright—
I am diaphanous with light,
And I see through every pore :
Earth beneath me seems to drop
Ocean, steppe, and mountain-top,
Far into the darkening space ;
And I soar—I soar—I soar
To a brighter dwelling-place,
Seeing, knowing, loving more.
Oh the glory opening on me !
Oh the fulness of the light !
Oh the love, th' eternal rapture !—
Shut it—shut it from my sight.
Tongue, be silent ! and thou, spirit,
Worship in the Infinite !

Preparing for Publication.

THE SALAMANDRINE ;

OR,

LOVE AND IMMORTALITY.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

AUTHOR OF THE "HOPE OF THE WORLD," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," &c.

THIRD EDITION. *Price One Shilling.*

Opinions of the Press.

Nothing can be more graceful than the manner in which Mr. Mackay has versified this fanciful legend, or more apposite than the imagery with which he has surrounded it. He exhibits the true earnestness and sensibility of the poet, and will find more readers and admirers of his "*Salamandrine*," than, judging from his preface, he seems to calculate on.—*Sun*.



We have seldom read a poem more unpretending in its style, and yet so beautifully and exquisitely conceived. The seven cantos into which it is divided, abound with passages that breathe the very soul of poetry. We take leave of this delightful work, hoping that Mr. Mackay may soon again appear with an offering of his genius, to elevate the character of the poetic literature of the present age.—*Dublin Evening Post*.

We are acquainted with no production of our time more richly imbued with the true poetic spirit—more eminently distinguished by the sweetness of simplicity—by the tenderest pathos—by an exceeding delicacy and purity of thought, feeling, and expression. Penetrating the inmost recesses of the heart, it forcibly reminds us, in many passages, of one of the most exquisite poems in our language—Coleridge's "*Genevieve*." Amethysta, the heroine, is amongst the loveliest of poetical creations; and never once, from the commencement to the close, does our anxiety for her fate experience languor or cessation.—*Naval and Military Gazette*.

The characteristics of the "*Salamandrine*" may be mentioned as, beauty of description—picturesqueness of effect—simplicity and pathos—the utmost delicacy of thought, feeling, and expression—a purity of sentiment approaching the angelic.—*Court Journal*.

Had we not seen the "*Undine*," we should pronounce the "*Salamandrine*" the most beautiful example of this species of fiction; we have little hesitation in saying that it is second only to that matchless production.—*The Tablet*.

As a poem, containing passages of rare and exquisite beauty, in many a varied strain, from the bold, pompous, and majestic, to the gentle, passionless, and slow, with here and there a burst of eloquent thought—it must be read, admired, and eulogised; but as the bearer of a high moral lesson, against a vice too prevalent among mankind, it is of more than ordinary interest.—*Glasgow Chronicle*.



VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY,
LL. D.,

AUTHOR OF "VOICES FROM THE CROWD," "THE SALAMANDRINE,"
"LEGENDS OF THE ISLES," &c. &c.



"Che fai alma? che pensi?"

PETRARCH.

LONDON:

WM. S. ORR AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXLVII.





LONDON :

VIZETELLY BROTHERS AND CO., PRINTERS AND ENGRAVERS,
PETERBOROUGH COURT, FLEET STREET.

TO
MRS. MATHESON,
OF
ACHANY AND THE LEWIS, &c.

WHOSE LOVE OF LITERATURE, ELEGANCE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT,
AND PRACTICE OF ALL THE VIRTUES THAT ADORN HER STATION,
ARE WELL KNOWN AND APPRECIATED
BY THOSE WHO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF HER ACQUAINTANCE,

THE FOLLOWING VERSES



ARE VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE favour with which his last "Voices" were received has led to the title and to the publication of the present. With favour, or without it, any Author who is in love with his task will write; but without favour, in this day of superabundance of books, he will do wrong to publish. The Author of the following, while he has no thanks to give to his readers for any inducements to write, has many to give them for the inducements to publish which their good opinion has afforded. That good opinion has been doubly pleasant to him; pleasant as an encouragement, and pleasant for adding strength to a long-cherished conviction that, practical as the age may be, it is not too practical to refuse to listen to the voice of song, when he who sings is in earnest.







PREFACE.

Mr. Emerson, in one of his thoughtful Essays, speaks of “*new voices*, reviving a hope that the thoughts of the mind may yet, in some distant age—in some happy hour—be executed by the hands.” The Author hopes that these “New Voices” of his may reach beyond the wilderness to the “Crowd” that listened to him before, and that they may not altogether fail in exciting others to indulge in the same aspirations for the good of humanity in which he indulges himself.

APRIL 25th, 1847.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE PROLOGUE	1
THE MAN IN THE DEAD SEA	14
ETERNAL JUSTICE	25
NOW	29
THE VISION OF MOCKERY	33
WE ARE WISER THAN WE KNOW	45
THE PHANTOMS OF ST. SEPULCHRE	48
THE CONFESSION	56
THE CHILD AND THE MOURNERS.	69
LOVE OR WISDOM?—AN EXAMINATION	72
THE DROP OF AMBROSIA	76
THE FOLLOWER	80
LET US ALONE	86
MELODIES AND MYSTERIES	89
THE OUT-COMER AND THE IN-GOER	91
CLEON AND I	97
THE LITTLE MOLES	99
IMOGEN'S JOURNEY	102
TWO MYSTERIES	113

VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

THE PROLOGUE.

“ WE three are young ; we have a month to spare :
Móney enough ; and, whistling off our care,
We can forsake the turmoil of the town,
And tread the wilds—making our faces brown
With sunshine, on the peaks of some high Ben.
Let us away—three glad, unburden’d men—
And trace some mountain-torrent to its source,
Mid fern, and heather, juniper, and gorse,
Braving all weathers. I, with gun, one day
Will cater for you, and go forth to slay
The grouse in corries, where it loves to dwell ;
Or sit with you, upon some granite-fell,
And talk for hours of high philosophy,
Or sun ourselves in warmth of poesy :

And should these tire, with rod in hand, we'll go
To streams that leap—too frolicsome to flow—
Angling for trout, and catch them by themselves,
In fancied citadel, beneath the shelves
Of slippery stone, o'er which the waters rush.
Let us away. My cheeks and forehead flush
At the mere thought; so glad would be my soul
To be alone with Nature for one whole
Untrammell'd month—having no thought of dross,
Or dull entanglements of gain and loss;
Of Blackstone drear, or Barnewell's Reports,
Or aught that smells of lawyers and the courts.
Let us away, this pleasant summer time,
Thou, Karl, canst muse, and shape the tuneful rhyme
Amidst thy well-beloved hills and straths:
Thou, Patrick, canst ascend the mountain-paths,
Thy well-filled flask in pocket, and rehearse
Plain prose with me, as genial as his verse;
And wet or whet each argumental flaw
With running waters, dashed with usquebaugh."
Thus Alistor, a Templar keen and young,
Of a clear head, and of a fluent tongue;—
Subtle logician, but with earnest mind,
And heart brimful of hope for human kind,

Spake to his friends ; and him, with voice of cheer,
Answer'd the rhymers : " Half one toilsome year
I've moiled in cities, and, like thee, I long
To see the placid lochs, the torrents strong,
The purple moors, the white rocks, crimson-crowned,
And amber waters, in their depths embrowned.
One month of freedom, from the drowsy thrall
Of custom, would be health, joy, wisdom, all,
To us who know each other, and delight
To be let loose into the infinite
Of our own fancies—free from task and rule,
And all the stiff conventions of the school
Of the great world. Our tyrant, lean-faced care,
Shall not pursue us to the mountain air,
If we play truant. Let us hence away,
And have one month of pleasure while we may."
Patrick, the rough in speech, the true in heart,
A sculptor, born to elevate his art,
And loving it with fervour, such as burned
In old Pygmalion's spirit, when he yearned
For the sweet image that his hands had made,
Shouted consent. " But whither bound ?" he said,
" What far off mountain-summit shall we scale ?
What salt-sea loch, winding through many a vale,

Shall we explore? Or shall we rather glide
Through lakes inland, unruffled by a tide?—
Not that it matters. Thou, friend poet, know'st
Better than we all grandeurs of the coast:
The lochs, the straths, the hoary-headed Bens,
The windy corries, and the wild, green glens,
And all the thunderous waterfalls that leap
Betwixt the Atlantic and the German deep;
And we will follow, if our guide thou'lt be,
By Lomond, Linnhe, Lochy, or Maree:
Through Rosshire moors, to Hebridean isle,
Or mid the lordly mountains of Argyll,
Where'er thou wilt." The poet made reply,
With a keen pleasure sparkling in his eye:
"There is a valley, beautifully lone,
Rude of access, to few but hunters known:
A glen so full of grey magnificence,
Of rock and mountain, that with love intense,
Salvator's self, if thither he had strayed,
Might, rapture-struck, a dwelling-place have made
Of some wild nook. There, filled with ecstasies,
He might have sat, his spirit in his eyes,
And all his mind impregnate, till he wrought
On the dumb canvas an immortal thought.

But not all rude and gloomy is the vale :
Ye wild thyme odours, floating on the gale ;
Ye tufts of heather, blooming on the slopes ;
Ye birch-trees, waving from the rocky copes
Of many a hill, your boughs festooned in braids,
Or drooping, like the locks of love-lorn maids ;
Ye dark green pines ; ye larches, fan-like, spread ;
And ye, witch-scaring rowans, gleaming red ;
Ye flowers innumerable, earth-jewels fair,
That lift your eyelids to the morning air ;
And all ye torrents, that with eloquent voice,
Call on the mountain-echoes to rejoice
And sing, amid the wilderness, a song
Of jubilant gladness, when your floods are strong ;—
Attest the wild luxuriance of the scene
That lengthening spreads (with many a strath between,
And purple moorland, haunt of birds and bees)
Around the fern-clad feet and shaggy knees
Of mighty Nevis, monarch of the hills,
The paramount of mountains, gemmed with rills,
Scantily robed ; his Titan-shoulders nude,
Lifting his head in royal solitude
Above his peers, and looking grimly down
Over all Britain from his misty crown.”

Thus spake the rhymers ; and between them three
Was made a binding compact, suddenly,
That they should waken with the morning sun,
And journey northwards. As was said, was done.
Borne on the wings of steam, ten leagues an hour,
They called it slow, but blessed its mighty power ;
And thought awhile, in pensive wonder dumb,
Of greater triumphs in the days to come,
When Distance (dim tradition of the Past,
Worn-out idea, too absurd to last)
Should bar no more the enterprise of man,
Nor Time compress his efforts to a span ;
When docile lightnings, tethered to a wire,
Should turn to messengers at his desire,
And bearing thoughts from Europe to Cathay,
Start at the twilight and return ere day :
And of the social evils that should cease
In the new age of intercourse and peace ;
When War, old tyrant, bloody-faced and pale,
Should yield his breath, run over on the rail ;—
Crushed by the car of Steam, no more to rise
To fill the world with tears and agonies.

Short was their stay, nor turned they ev'n aside
To view the mighty city of the Clyde,

The great metropolis of plodding folk,
Tall chimneys, cotton, enterprise, and smoke;
But bound for Crinan while the morn was new,
Bade to the lovely Firth a fond adieu.

Clear was the sky ; the sea reflected back
The morning lustre, as they held their track
By Rothesay, through the Kyles ; and evermore
Some varied beauty wooed them from the shore
To gaze upon it. Green hills speck'd with sheep,
Or jutting rocks that nodded o'er the deep ;
And, here and there, some mighty boulder stone,
Rolled from a precipice to stand alone—
Memento of convulsions that had wrung
The hills to agony when earth was young.

High to the south, majestic Arran rear'd
Its jagged peaks, storm-battered, riv'n, and seared ;
And blue Lochfine, enswathed by mountains dun,
Displayed her teeming bosom to the sun,
And raised her ripples to reflect the light,
While graceful sea-gulls plumed in snowy white,
Followed the creaming furrow of the prow
With easy pinion pleasurable slow,

Then on the waters floated like a fleet
Of tiny vessels, argosies complete,
Such as brave Gulliver, deep wading, drew
Victorious from the ports of Blefuscu.

And sweet to these rejoicing mariners
Were Crinan's banks, o'ergrown with sunny furze,
With berried brambles, spotted foxglove bells,
Like Mab's pagodas built on pigmy fells,
With hawthorn bushes, purple-crested heath,
And orchis and anemones beneath
In plenteous beauty. Disembarking here,
Fresh for the exercise, and full of cheer,
They walked rejoicing onward, staff in hand,
Across the isthmus, nine good miles of land,
And left the lingering track-boat in the locks,
While they went scrambling over briery rocks
For heather sprigs, to grace their caps of blue ;
Then on again, rejoicing in the view
Of fertile valleys dotted black with kine,
And hills knee-deep in tamarisk and pine ;
Discoursing as they went of mica schist,
The old red sandstone, and the great " Fire mist"
Of nebulae—exploded ; and the birth,

Myriads of ages past, of a young earth ;—
Still young and fresh, though venerably old ;
And of the wondrous tale in “Cosmos” told,
Of heavenly architecture infinite,
Suns, systems, groups, revolving in the light
Of beauty eternal, and eternal law ;—
Of infinite love, magnificence, and awe.

And thus the hours were rapidly consumed
In furnace of their thought, and toil entombed
In mental working ; so that when the sea
Burst on their startled vision suddenly,
They doubted if their eyes beheld indeed
Loch Crinan, and those seas that, like a mead
Sprinkled with flow'rs, were studded o'er with isles :
But soon they knew them gleaming in the smiles
Of an unclouded sun ; and once again
Stepping on ship-board, steamed along the main.

Most lovely ! oh ! most beautiful and grand
Were all the scenes of this romantic land !
Isle after isle, with grey empurpled rocks,
Breasted in steadfast majesty the shocks,
Stupendous, of the wild Atlantic wave ;
Many a desolate sonorous cave

Re-echoed through its inmost vaults profound,
The mighty diapason and full sound
Of Corryvreckan—awful orator—
Preaching to lonely isles with eloquent roar ;
Many a mountain reared its lordly crest,
Bronzed or empurpled by the radiant west ;
Many a hill-girt loch indented far
The mainland ; many a high and frowning scaur.
The haunt of sea-fowl, raised its barren form,
Furrowed with age, defiant of the storm ;
And over all this hazy realm was spread
A halo of sad memories of the dead :
Of mournful love-tales ; of old tragedies,
Filling the heart with pity, and the eyes
With tears, at bare remembrance ; and old songs
Of love's endurance, love's despair, love's wrongs
And triumph o'er all obstacles at last ;
And all the grief and passion of the past.
Invoking these to daylight from the womb
Of dim tradition, into fuller bloom
Of their fresh fancy, greater ravishment
Was it to them to ponder as they went,
Upon each legend in its own sad place,
To which it lent a beauty and a grace.

And when they reached the rock-bound shore of Mull,
A land of driving sleets and vapours dull,
But filled with mournful grandeur and austere
Magnificence, the Western wave shone clear
In the last beams of day. The dying light,
Ere it departed, swathed each mountain height
In robes of purple; and adown the west,
Where sea and sky seemed mingling—breast to breast—
Drew the dense banks of ponderous clouds, and spread
A mantle o'er them of a royal red,
Belted with purple—lined with amber—tinged
With fiery gold—and blushing-purple fringed.

And gorgeous was it o'er the Western Isles
To gaze upon the sunset mid those piles
Of mountainous clouds. They reared their sunny copes
Like heavenly alps, with cities on their slopes,
Built amid glaciers—bristling fierce with towers,
Turrets, and battlements of warlike powers—
Jaggèd with priestly pinnacles and spires—
And crowned with domes, that glittered in the fires
Of the slant sun, like smithied silver bright;—
The capitals of Cloudland. When the light
Grew paler, and the Eastern dark came down,

And o'er the mystery drew his mantle brown,
'T was lovely still to watch the shore and sea
Robed in the garment of obscurity ;
To see the head-lands looming through the mist,
As if dissevered from the earth, they wist
Not altogether of which element
They were a part, indissolubly blent.

The lights of Oban glimmer'd faint and far,
And over Cruachan shone out one star
Attendant on the moon ; who, issuing forth
Yellow and full, displayed to all the north
Her matron face, and o'er each eastern hill
Poured sleepy lustre. Beautifully still
Lay Lochlin in her beams—Lochlin whose breast
Wafted so oft the chieftains of the west
To bloody warfare ; Lochlin that of yore
The galleys of the Gael to battle bore
Against the men of haughty Innisfail ;
Lochlin of storms, where Fingal spread his sail
To meet Cuchullin ; Lochlin of the spears ;
Blue Lochlin of the songs of other years.
A mournful sea it was, a mournful shore ;
But yet so lovely, vested in the hoar

Antiquity of many memories,
That they regretted when their watchful eyes
Descried Fortwilliam and their journey's end,
And great Ben Nevis, corried, strath'd, and glenn'd,
Rising before them. Soon the sorrow pass'd,—
For they had reached a resting place at last,
Where for a season they might feed Delight
On Beauty, and in worldly Care's despite
Give themselves up to Nature—not in part,
But with all energy of mind and heart—
That ere returning to the world again
That little month might make them better men.
And what they talked of, what they dreamed or sung,
What tales they told, or beads of fancy strung,
What aspirations of a better time,
They formed for men, behold in rhythm and rhyme.

THE MAN IN THE DEAD SEA.

AN APOLOGUE.

WALKING on the Dead Sea shore,
Meditating evermore,
Underneath the burning ray
Of intolerable day,
I beheld a fearful thing—

Bloody deed as e'er was done,
Wrought, unblushing, unrelenting,
In the presence of the sun.

Fair, and young, and bright was he,
Who that morning walked with me,
By the margin of the sea;
Calm, and eloquent, and wise,
Radiant in immortal youth;
Knowledge sparkled from his eyes,
From his forehead living truth.

He was a youth indeed divine,
A master and a friend of mine,
For whose dear sake I would have given
All on the mortal side of heaven.

We talked together and paced along ;
We did no mortal creature wrong ;
And sometimes sitting on the sands,
Or on the jutting rocks below,
He looked at me, and clasped my hands,
And told me things I ought to know—
Things of heaven and things of earth,
Things of wisdom and of mirth ;
The wisdom cheerful, the mirth most wise,
And both brimful of mysteries.

There came a woman by the way,
A stately woman, proud and strong ;
Her robe of purple velvet shone,
Like a starry night, with precious stone,
And trailed the sands as she swept along.
She wore a dagger at her side,
Jewel-hilted, bright, and keen :
You might have told, by her crown of gold,
This gorgeous woman was a queen.

But more by her eyes, that flashed the fire
Of one accustomed to control ;
To rule in awe, and give the law
That binds the body and the soul.
And, in her train, there followed her
A well-armed troop of stalwart men,
So bloody and bare, I do not care
Ever to see their like again.

My friend arose and looked at her ;
Calm and beautiful he stood,
With such magnificence of eye,
As God but gives unto the good.
She scowled at him ; each quivering limb
In all her body spoke her wrath ;
And her fearful tongue loud curses flung
At the mild presence in her path :
“ Monster of evil ! fiend of guile !
What brings thee here to blast my sight ?
But since thou darest in the day,
To meet and brave me in the way,
We'll try thy power—we'll know thy right.”

“ Lady,” said he, and mildly spoke,
While heavenly beauty lit his face,
“ My God hath made me what I am,
And given me an abiding place ;

And if my presence please thee not,
The world is wide—thou need'st not come,
To slay me in each quiet spot,
Where I have sanctified a home.
Thou 'st taken from me wide domains,
And followed me with hate and scorn ;
Enjoy thine own—let me alone—
I wait in patience for the morn."

A frenzy flushed her burning brow,
A rage too mighty to contain ;
Her nostrils widened, and seemed to smoke ;
She grasped her neck as she would choke,
And then, like one who suffered pain,
Her trembling lips she did compress ;
Her cheeks grew cold and colourless.
But soon the madness of her blood
Boiled in her bosom where she stood ;
Her eyes seemed coals of living flame,
And incoherent curses came,
Gaspings and gurgling, from her mouth.
Never tornado of the south
Made half the wreck as, in that hour,
She would have made had she the power.

My friend stood by, with folded arms,
Serene, and innocent, and pure ;
And when she saw that he but smiled
At all her hate, she could endure
No longer on his face to look,
But smote it with her jewelled hand :
“ Insensate wretch ! ” she fiercely said,
“ Let me not slay thee where I stand ;
I will not stab thee to the heart,
Lest, in my haste, I mar delight,
And thou shouldst die and end thy pain
Too suddenly before my sight.
Not yet thy venomous blood shall flow,
But I *will* slay thee ere I go ! ”

Her body-guards, so fierce and grim,
Seized his arms and pinioned him ;
And every one, with his gauntlet on,—
An iron gauntlet, heavy to bear,—
Smote him on his cheeks and eyes,
And bruised his lips, so ruddy fair,
Till the blood started and over-dyed
The bloom of his face with gory red.
And then they spat on him in spite,
And heaped foul curses on his head.

And he—what could he do but pray,
And let them work their cruel will?—
Turned his looks to the judging sky,
Appealing, though forgiving still.

Then from his lily skin they tore
Every vestment that he bore ;
Smote him, threw him on the ground,
And his limbs with fetters bound ;
Naked, helpless, and forlorn,
Mark for all their wrath and scorn ;
And, with lying words, accused
Of every shame, deceit, and crime ;
And, when once he strove to speak,
Filled his mouth with sand and slime ;
Stamping on him as he lay,
Bound and bleeding on the way.
And I, alas ! alone, alone !
Could but curse them and bemoan
That I could not, as I trod,
Grasp th' avenging bolts of God.

And as he lay upon the beach,
Deprived of motion and of speech,

The queen, that woman so proud and fierce,
Looked upon him with feverish joy ;
Her fiery glances seemed to pierce
Through and through the bleeding boy.
She put her hand on his naked breast,
And felt his heart : " Ah ! well," said she ;
" It beats and beats, but shall not beat
To vex me thus incessantly."
And she drew the poniard from her side,
Slowly, calmly, sheath and all ;
Unsheathed it—felt if its edge was sharp,
And dipped its point in poisonous gall ;
And, kneeling down, with flashing face,
Gazed upon him, in that place.

She did *not* stab him : she grasped his flesh
As if she'd tear it from his bones ;
Then took the slime from his bleeding mouth
That she might hear his piteous groans.
He faintly said, " Thou canst not kill ;
My charmed life defies thy will."
" I can," she answered--whispering low ;—
" This is the death that thou shalt know.

Thy days are numbered—thy race is run ;

Thou art an insult to the sun."

And in his breast, up to the hilt,

She plunged the dagger, and wrenched it round.

Then drew it out with a joyous cry,

And pointed to the ghastly wound ;

Then drove it in again—again,

With force redoubled every time ;

And left it sticking in his heart

For very luxury of crime.

Sense and motion left his frame,

From his lips no breathing came :

"He's dead," quoth she ; "he's dead at last,

And all my agony is past.

Take him up, let the Dead Sea wave

Float him about without a grave ;

Take him up, and throw him in.

In these waters none can sink ;

Mid the foul naphtha let him swim,

To gorge the vultures, limb by limb,

When they come to the water's brink ;

And if they come not, let him lie,

Rotting betwixt the wave and sky ;—

Take him by the heels and chin,
And spit on him, and cast him in."

They twined their coarse hands in his hair;
They took his body so white and fair;
They spat upon his patient face,
Pale, but filled with heavenly grace;
They took him up, and in the sea,
They cast him ignominiously.
And the fearful woman, proud and strong,
The fiendish woman who did the wrong,
Bade clarion sound, and trumpet play,
And went exulting on her way.

A sudden wind—a treacherous wind
Arose upon that Dead Sea shore;
The heavy waves began to swell,
To chafe, and foam, and lash, and roar;
A gloom o'erspread the clear blue sky:—
Once alone I could descry
His fair white limbs go floating by
On the crest of a distant wave;
And I sat me down upon the sand,
Wailing that I, with strong right hand,
Had not snatched him from the grave,

And smitten the murderess to the dust
Ere she sacrificed the just.

All that day the storm blew high,
And all that day I lingered there ;
There was no living thing but I
On the shore of that sad sea,
And I was moaning piteously.

Towards the night the wind blew fair,
And the silver rim of the bright new moon
Shone in a deep cerulean air,
And looked at itself in the salt lagoon.
And there was silence, cold as death ;
Not a motion but my breath.

Long I sat upon the shore,
Brooding on that cruel wrong,
Wondering if for evermore
The evil thing should be the strong ;
When I heard a sudden sound
In the waters far away,
And saw a phosphorescent track
On the breast of the waves so dull and black.

I listened—I could plainly hear
The measured stroke, precise and clear,
Of a swimmer swimming near :—

I looked—I saw the floating locks,
The face upturned, the bosom brave,
The calm, full eyes, that looked on me,
Through the darkness of the sea ;

The strong limbs, battling with the wave :—
I saw the motion—I heard the breath,
I knew his victory over death.

It was my friend—my living friend ;

I clasped him, clad him, wept for joy.

“They may think,” he said, “to strike me dead ;

They can but wound me—not destroy.

The strongest bands, the fastest chain
On my free limbs will not remain ;
For the deepest wounds that hate can strike

I find a healing in the air ;

Even poisoned weapons cannot kill ;

They 're powerless 'gainst the life I bear.

And she, whose hate pursues me still,

A queen superb, of lofty line,



Shall have her day—then fade away,

And all her empire shall be mine.”



ETERNAL JUSTICE.

THE man is thought a knave or fool,
Or bigot, plotting crime,
Who, for the advancement of his kind,
Is wiser than his time.
For him the hemlock shall distil ;
For him the axe be bared ;
For him the gibbet shall be built ;
For him the stake prepared :
Him shall the scorn and wrath of men
Pursue with deadly aim ;
And malice, envy, spite, and lies,
Shall desecrate his name.
But truth shall conquer at the last,
For round and round we run,
And ever the right comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.



Pace through thy cell, old Socrates,
Cheerily to and fro ;
Trust to the impulse of thy soul
And let the poison flow.
They may shatter to earth the lamp of clay
That holds a light divine,
But they cannot quench the fire of thought
By any such deadly wine :
They cannot blot thy spoken words
From the memory of man,
By all the poison ever was brewed
Since time its course began.
To-day abhorred, to-morrow adored,
So round and round we run,
And ever the truth comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.

Plod in thy cave grey Anchorite ;
Be wiser than thy peers ;
Augment the range of human power,
And trust to coming years.
They may call thee wizard, and monk accursed,
And load thee with dispraise :
Thou wert born five hundred years too soon
For the comfort of thy days.

But not too soon for human kind :
Time hath reward in store ;
And the demons of our sires become
The saints that we adore.
The blind can see, the slave is lord ;
So round and round we run ;
And ever the wrong is proved to be wrong,
And ever is justice done.

Keep, Galileo, to thy thought,
And nerve thy soul to bear ;
They may gloat o'er the senseless words they wring
From the pangs of thy despair :
They may veil their eyes, but they cannot hide
The sun's meridian glow ;
The heel of a priest may tread thee down,
And a tyrant work thee woe ;
But never a truth has been destroyed :
They may curse it and call it crime ;
Pervert and betray, or slander and slay
Its teachers for a time.
But the sunshine aye shall light the sky,
As round and round we run ;
And the truth shall ever come uppermost,
And justice shall be done.

And live there *now* such men as these—

With thoughts like the great of old?

Many have died in their misery,

And left their thought untold;

And many live, and are ranked as mad,

And placed in the cold world's ban,

For sending their bright far-seeing souls

Three centuries in the van.

'They toil in penury and grief,

Unknown, if not maligned;

Forlorn, forlorn, bearing the scorn

Of the meanest of mankind.

But yet the world goes round and round,

And the genial seasons run,

And ever the truth comes uppermost,

And ever is justice done.

N O W.

THE venerable Past—is past ;
 'Tis dark, and shines not in the ray :
'Twas good, no doubt—'t is gone at last—
 There dawns another day.
Why should we sit where ivies creep,
And shroud ourselves in charnels deep ;
Or the world's yesterdays deplore,
Mid crumbling ruins' mossy hoar ?
Why should we see with dead men's eyes,
 Looking at WAS from morn to night,
When the beauteous Now, the divine TO BE,
 Woo with their charms our living sight ?
Why should we hear but echoes dull
When the world of sound, so beautiful,
 Will give us music of our own ?
Why in the darkness will we grope,
When the sun, in heaven's resplendent cope,
 Shines as bright as ever it shone ?

Abraham saw no brighter stars
Than those which burn for thee and me.
When Homer heard the lark's sweet song,
Or night-bird's lovelier melody,
They were such sounds as Shakspeare heard,
Or Chaucer, when he blessed the bird ;
Such lovely sounds as we can hear.
Great Plato saw the vernal year
Send forth its tender flowers and shoots,
And luscious autumn pour its fruits ;
And we can see the lilies blow,
The corn-fields wave, the rivers flow :
For us all bounties of the earth,
For us its wisdom, love, and mirth,
If we daily walk in the sight of God,
And prize the gifts He has bestowed.
We will not dwell amid the graves,
Nor in dim twilights sit alone,
To gaze at moulder'd architraves,
Or plinths and columns overthrown ;
We will not only see the light
Through painted windows, cobwebb'd o'er,
Nor know the beauty of the night
Save by the moonbeam on the floor :

But in the presence of the sun,
Or moon, or stars, our hearts shall glow;
We'll look at nature face to face,
And we shall LOVE because we KNOW.
The present needs us. Every age
Bequeaths the next for heritage
No lazy luxury or delight—
But strenuous labour for the right;
For *Now*, the child and sire of Time
Demands the deeds of earnest men
To make it better than the past,
And stretch the circle of its ken.

Now is a fact that men deplore,
Though it might bless them evermore,
Would they but fashion it aright:
'Tis ever new, 'tis ever bright.

Time, nor Eternity, hath seen
A repetition of delight
In all its phases: ne'er hath been
For men or angels that which *is*;
And that which *is* hath ceased to be
Ere we have breathed it, and its place
Is lost in the Eternity.

But *Now* is ever good and fair,
Of the Infinitude the heir,
And we of it. So let *us* live
That from the Past we may receive
Light for the Now—from Now a joy
That Fate nor Time shall e'er destroy.

THE VISION OF MOCKERY.

ALL happy things are earnest. Once I roamed
In England, or in Dreamland, through the streets
Of a huge, buzzing, dense, metropolis.
Slowly, in teeming thoroughfares, I walked
One of the people, hearing with their ears,
Beholding with their eyes, and in their thought
Divining, till my soul was filled with grief
At all that I beheld, and felt, and knew.

It was a gibing, laughing, sneering crowd,
Devoid of truth, faith, love, and earnestness,
Except a horrid earnestness for gain ;
Fierce love of lucre, which, if one had not,
He was despised and trodden down of men :
Which, if one had, he was adored of all,
Placed on a pinnacle to be admired,
Flattered, and filled with other rich men's gifts ;
His overflowing fulness made more full,

His vulgarness thought choice gentility,
His vices virtues, and his prejudice
Wisdom innate, his coarse words oracles,
And he a chief and model of mankind.

But for all else than wealth these swarming crowds
Had slight regard ; and when their daily toil
In search of it was done, and time hung loose,
They gathered in their clubs and theatres,
In market-place, or corner of the streets,
And mocked and gibed, and held the best buffoon
The wisest man, so he but made them laugh.
Nothing was holy to these wretched crowds,
But all things food for jest and ribald wit,
Caricature, lampoon, and mockery.
I said to one, " Is this the end of life ?
Is there no reverence for God or man ?"
He turned and looked, and with a well-bred stare,
Eyed me askance : " What would you have ?" quoth he :
" We keep our reverence for sabbath-days,
And look demure the seventh part of our time.
If for six days we toil, six nights we laugh,
And who shall blame us ? What new bore art thou,
From lands hyperborean, that canst think

Laughter a crime?" "Nay," I replied, "not so;
Laughter is virtuous, if there be a cause:
But mockery!"—Thereat he smiled again,
Arching his eyebrows, that his eyes, full-stretched,
Might take the measure of my littleness,
And disappeared amid the gathering throng.

I spake no more, but wandered wearily on,
Until I reached a wide and crowded mart,
Where one, a mild and venerable man,
Addressed the multitude with slow, clear voice.
Few gave him audience; but he heeded not,
And spoke his thought, unmindful of the jeers
Of would-be wits, and shallow mountebanks,
Scoffers and punsters, and obese dull clowns.

"Vain and unhappy multitudes," he said,
That gibe and sneer at every holy thing,
Is this your law of life? Is this the end?
Lo! ye have souls immortal and sublime,
To be made infinite in love and light,
And heavenly knowledge, if ye will but ope
The inner fountains and the inner eyes,
And see the deep and full significance,
The worth and wherefore of the life of man.

Is it not sad, O myriad, myriad souls,
Infinite and immortal as ye are,
That ye will make your own infinity
A retrogression? Immortality,
Change of vile vesture for a viler still?
That ye will circle with the feculent clay
Your life-light heavenly clear, until it burn
No fairer, to the outward world, than foul.
Thick exhalations of a stagnant fen?
Is it not sad, that germs which should expand,
Even here, to trees of bole magnificent,
Should rot and perish in unsavoury mire;
Or, ere they rot, be eaten up by swine,—
Swine of ill-passion, selfishness, and lust?
Is it not sad—a thing for bitter tears—
Unless for hope, and efforts made more strong
By seeming hopelessness—that men should live
And never know the meaning of their life?
That they should die, and never know that death
Is change, not ceasing; and that life and death
Are ebb and flow of an eternal tide,
In which the ripple may become a wave,
The wave a sea, the sea a universe?

“Alas! poor crowds! self-quenched, self-sacrificed,
Why will ye crawl, when ye might walk erect?
Why will ye grovel, when ye might aspire?
Why will ye don foul rags, when ye might wear
Angelic vestments? Why co-herd with beasts,
And graze in fields, or wallow in the mire,
When ye might feed on manna dropped from heaven?”

Thereat a listener in the crowd exclaimed—
One with a portly paunch, and large round face,
And little twinkling eyes,—“You waste your words:
Why do you preach to us of things like these,
Things transcendental and absurdly wise?
The earth is man’s; man is the earth’s. Forget
These idle dreams; and eat, and drink, and laugh,
And speculate, and hoard a heap of gold;
And so be one of us, that as you live
You may enjoy; and when you die, die well,
Leaving plump money-bags to bless your sons.”
And all the people laughed, and cried, “Hear! hear!”
With loud applause, and shouts vociferous.
But still the orator undaunted stood,
Though laughter sputtered round him, and vain scoffs,
Like muddy showerlets, fell on every side;

And more he would have said, but that a cry
Of one in haste, and in great stress of speech,
Made interruption: "Lo! the children die!
The little children, and you heed them not.
The children die: they perish, body and soul,
In pestilent lanes, and rotting alleys vile;
Thousands on thousands, more than eyes can count.
God's sun shines on them, but they never heard
His name who made it: the fair world they tread
Is foul to them that never saw the fields,
The green trees, the great mountains, the bright streams,
Or knew that God, who fashioned all things, loves
All he has made, and children most of all,
The purest from his hand. Why should they die?
For life in ignorance is very death.
Some of them toil, and waste their tender limbs
In mills, or mines, from morn till past the night:
Machines of flesh, too sorely overwrought
To reach maturity ere they grow old.
Some of them toil not, but by night and day
Prowl in the fetid ways, and lie, and steal,
And curse; and never know that words can bless,
Or that such thing as blessing in this world
Was ever heard of:—Save, oh! save them all:

If not for their sakes, for our own ! Not one
Of all these myriads, were we truly wise,
Should perish thus. For, though they live in shame,
And fill the world with crimes and miseries,
Great is their sorrow, but the guilt is ours."

He ceased, and through the crowd a murmur ran,
As though his words had moved them to remorse,
Or pity—but it died away ; and one
Speaking for many, as if he alone
Were mouth-piece and interpreter of men,
Exclaimed in pompous wise, " Why should we heed ?
Why interfere ? It is a perilous thing
To step between a parent and its child.
Each for himself ; each father for his own :
No good can come of such philosophy.
It weighs all things in theoretic scales,
And meddles but to mar. The world is good ;
Let it alone : 'twill educate itself."
He ceased, and looked about him with a smile
That said, as plainly as a smile can say,
How smart he was, how practically wise
Whereat another, taking up the chant,
Said, " Bah ! it irks my patience evermore,

To hear such vulgar flattery of the crowd ;
Were they not born to drudge, to groan, to sweat ?
Is't not so written in the Book ? If so,
Why give them knowledge they can never use ?
A little of it is a poisonous thing,
And much is utterly beyond their reach ;—
So, prithee, Master Quack, let well alone.
If thou canst sing for our amusement, sing ;
Or dance, then dance ; or jest, then jest away ;
Stand on thy head, cut capers in the air,
Or any thing thou wilt but preach of this.”
Thereat the crowd laughed as with one accord ;
And when the earnest man again essayed
To speak his truth, they raised derisive shouts
That stifled all his words upon his lips,
And filled his heart and mine with pity and grief.

What more was said I know not, nor how long
I stood amongst them ; but a sudden cry,
And rushing of the people to one place,
Aroused me from my lethargy, and, lo !
I heard a voice potential with the crowd,
Coarse and stentorian, breaking on my ear :

“ Behold !” it said, “ behold the game of games.
The chance of chances—better than all trade,
Commerce, or industry pursued by man.
Who plays it well grows wealthy in a day ;
Who plays it ill may gain more great reward
Than Labour with his utmost pith and stress
Could sweat for in a life.” And as he spake,
Loose scraps of paper fluttered in his hands.
There seemed deep fascination in the sight,
For every eye beseeched, and every tongue
Implored him for them. From his vulgar clutch
They dropped like flakes of snow innumerable.
And then the scramble and the crash began ;
Old men and young, the famished and the full,
The rich and poor, widow, and wife, and maid,
Master and servant, all with one intent
Rushed on the paper ; from their eager eyes
Flashing a fierce, unconquerable greed,
Their hot palms itching, all their being filled
With one desire ; so that amid the press
If some were crushed and smitten to the ground
They heeded not, but trod on fallen heads
As unconcernedly as racing steeds
Trample the sward. And still the paper flakes

Fell fast around ; and still the crowd rushed on,
Roaring and wild, their myriad hands held up
To grasp the glittering prizes ere they fell.
Then came a pause. A fearful mockery
Began to spread. Each called his fellow—fool !
And every fool acknowledged—so he was,
But thought his neighbour greater fool than he.
And there was laughter loud, and stifled groans,
And shouts obstreperous, till all at once
They dropped the scraps of paper from their hands,
As if a leprosy was in its touch ;
And in their haste, o'er eager to depart
From that gross presence, trod each other down.

As in a burning theatre, a crowd
Rushing by hundreds to one narrow door,
Meet certain death to flee uncertain fire ;
So they in panic at the lust of gain,
That each man saw in others, not in self,
Fled in confusion, breathless and distraught,
Nor cared who died, if they themselves escaped
I stood amazed, and blushed for human-kind,
When on my ears a strain of music broke,
Melting in soft harmonious cadences.

I looked, and on a platform raised on high,
Beheld a lady beauteous as the dawn,
Dancing in robes of white and azure gauze;
Her breast was bare; her limbs nor bare, nor hid,
But full defined through her transparent robes,
Filled the beholders with voluptuous thoughts.
She seemed to float upon the buoyant air,
To be a creature of an element
More spiritual than earth; and when she smiled
There was such witchery in her painted cheeks,
That all the crowd, entranced with great delight,
And quite forgetful of their past distress,
Shouted with loud acclaim, and clapped their hands.
And when she twirl'd upon her pliant toe,
One fair limb vertical, the other raised
To horizontal straightness, such a burst
Of irrepressible, overpowering joy,
Filled all the air, it seemed as men were mad,
And dancing were supremest bliss of earth;—
The fairest dancer, first of woman-kind.
Then as she curtsied with a winning look
To her idolaters, a shower of wreaths,
Garlands, and evergreens, and laurel crowns,
Fell all around her, and another burst

Of universal gladness rang around ;
And she, descending from her platform, slid
Graceful into her chariot, and the crowd
Filled with new frenzy at her loveliness,
Unyoked her prancing jennets, dapple-grey,
And drew her forth triumphant to her home.

Still more amazed, I left this fearful crowd,
And wandered out amid the quiet woods
To hold communion with my secret soul,
And note, in Memory's many-storied book,
What I had seen and heard—that pondering well
Its true significance, I might extract
Good from the ill, and from the darkness light.

WE ARE WISER THAN WE KNOW.

THOU, who in the midnight silence
Lookest to the orbs on high,
Feeling humbled, yet elated,
In the presence of the sky ;
Thou, who minglest with thy sadness
Pride ecstatic, awe divine,
That ev'n *thou* canst trace their progress
And the law by which they shine—
Intuition shall uphold thee,
Even though reason drag thee low ;
Lean on faith, look up rejoicing,
We are wiser than we know.

Thou, who hearest plaintive music,
Or sweet songs of other days ;
Heaven-revealing organs pealing,
Or clear voices hymning praise,
And wouldst weep, thou know'st not wherefore,

Though thy soul is steep'd in joy ;
And the world looks kindly on thee,
And thy bliss hath no alloy—
Weep, nor seek for consolation,
Let the heaven-sent droplets flow,
They are hints of mighty secrets.
We are wiser than we know.

Thou, who in the noon-time brightness
Seest a shadow undefined ;
Hear'st a voice that indistinctly
Whispers caution to thy mind :
Thou, who hast a vague foreboding
That a peril may be near,
Even when Nature smiles around thee,
And thy Conscience holds thee clear—
Trust the warning—look before thee—
Angels may the mirror show,
Dimly still, but sent to guide thee,
We are wiser than we know

Countless chords of heavenly music,
Struck ere earthly time began,
Vibrate in immortal concord
To the answering soul of man :

Countless rays of heavenly glory
Shine through spirit pent in clay,
On the wise men at their labours,
On the children at their play.
Man has gazed on heavenly secrets,
Sunned himself in heavenly glow,
Seen the glory, heard the music,
We are wiser than we know.

THE PHANTOMS OF ST. SEPULCHRE.*

“ DIDST ever see a hanging ? ” “ No, not one ;
Nor ever wish to see such scandal done.
But once I saw a wretch condemned to die :
A lean-faced, bright-eyed youth ; who made me sigh
At the recital of a dream he had.
He was not sane—and yet he was not mad ;
Fit subject for a mesmerist he seemed ;
For when he slept, he saw ; and when he dreamed,
His visions were as palpable to him
As facts to us. My memory is dim
Upon his story, but I ’ll ne’er forget
The dream he told me, for it haunts me yet,

* It may be necessary to inform the reader, unacquainted with London, that the church of St. Sepulchre is close to the jail of Newgate ; and that its bell is tolled when a criminal is executed. *Few* will need to be reminded that the three stories related are not fabulous.

Impressed upon me by his earnest faith
That 't was no vision, but a sight which Death
Opened his eyes to see,—an actual glimpse
Into the world of spectres and of imps,
Vouchsafed to him on threshold of the grave—
List ! and I 'll give it, in the words he gave :—

“ Ay, you may think that I am crazed,
But what I saw, that did I see.
These walls are thick, my brain was sick,
And yet mine eyes saw lucidly.
Through the joists and through the stones
I could look as through a glass ;
And from this dungeon, damp and cold,
I watched the motley people pass.
All day long, rapid and strong,
Rolled to and fro the living stream ;
But in the night, I saw a sight—
I cannot think it was a dream.

“ Old St. Sepulchre's bell will toll
At eight to-morrow, for my soul ;
And thousands, not much better than I,
Will throng around to see me die ;

And many will bless their happy fate,
That they ne'er fell from their high estate,
Or did such deed as I have done ;
Though, from the rise to the set of sun,
They cheat their neighbours all their days,
And gather gold in slimy ways.
But my soul feels strong, and my sight grows clear.
As my death-hour approaches near,
And in its presence I will tell
The very truth, as it befel.

“The snow lies now on the house-tops cold,
Shrill, and keen the March winds blow ;
The rank grass of the churchyard mould
Is covered o'er with drifted snow ;
The graves in old St. Sepulchre's yard
Were white last night, when I looked forth,
And the sharp clear stars seemed to dance in the sky,
Rocked by the fierce winds of the north.

“The houses dull seemed numb with frost,
The streets seemed wider than of yore,
And the straggling passengers trod, like ghosts,
Silently on the pathway frore,

When I look'd through that churchyard rail,
And thought of the bell that should ring my doom,
And saw three women, sad and pale,
Sitting together on a tomb.

“A fearful sight it was to see,
As up they rose and looked at me :
Sunken were their cheeks and eyes,
Blue-cold were their feet, and bare ;
Lean and yellow were their hands,
Long and scanty was their hair ;
And round their necks I saw the ropes
Deftly knotted, tightly drawn ;
And knew they were not things of earth,
Or creatures that could face the dawn.

“Seen dimly in th' uncertain light,
They multiplied upon my sight ;
And things like men and women sprung—
Shapes of those who had been hung—
From the rank and clammy ground.
I counted them—I knew them all,
Each with its rope around its neck,
Marshalled by the churchyard wall.

“The stiff policeman, passing along,
Saw them not, nor made delay ;
A reeling bacchanal, shouting a song,
Looked at the clock, and went his way ;
A troop of girls, with painted cheeks,
Laughing and yelling in drunken glee,
Passed like a gust, and never looked
At the sight so palpable to me.
I saw them—heard them—felt their breath
Musty and raw and damp as death.

“These women three, these fearful shapes,
Looked at me through Newgate stone,
And raised their fingers, skinny and lank,
Whispering low in under tone :—
‘ His hour draws near,—he ’s one of us,—
His gibbet is built,—his noose is tied ;
They have put his name on his coffin lid :
The law of blood shall be satisfied.
He shall rest with us, and his name shall be
A by-word and a mockery.’

“ I whispered to one, ‘ What hadst thou done ? ’
She answered, whispering, and I heard—
Although a chime rang at the time—
Every sentence, every word,

Clear, above the pealing bells :—

· I was mad, and slew my child ;

Better than life, God knows, I loved it ;

But pain and hunger drove me wild.

Scorn and hunger, and grief and care,

And I slew it in my despair.

And for this deed they raised the gibbet ;

For this deed the noose they tied ;

And I hung and swung in the sight of men,

And the law of blood was satisfied.'

“ I said to the second, ‘ What didst thou ? ’

Her keen eyes flashed unearthly shine.

‘ I married a youth when I was young,

And thought all happiness was mine ;

But they stole him from me, to fight the French ;

And I was left in the world alone,

To beg or steal—to live or die,

Robbed of my stay, my all, my own.

England stole my lord from me,—

I stole a ribbon, was caught and tried ;

And I hung and swung in the sight of men,

And the law of blood was satisfied.'

“I said to the third, ‘What crime was thine?’
‘Crime!’ she answered, in accents meek,
‘The babe that sucks at its mother’s breast,
And smiles with its little dimpled cheek,
Is not more innocent than I.
But truth was feeble,—error was strong;
And guiltless of a deed of shame,
Men’s justice did me cruel wrong.
They would not hear my truthful words:
They thought me filled with stubborn pride.
And I hung and swung in the sight of men,
And the law of blood was satisfied.’

“Then one and all, by that churchyard wall,
Raised their skinny hands at me;
Their voices mingling like the sound
Of rustling leaves in a withering tree:
‘His hour has come, he’s one of us;
His gibbet is built, his noose is tied;
His knell shall ring, and his corpse shall swing,
And the law of blood shall be satisfied.’

“They vanished! I saw them, one by one,
With their bare blue feet on the drifted snow,
Sink like a thaw, when the sun is up,
To their wormy solitudes below.

Though *you* may deem this was a dream,
My facts are tangible facts to me ;
For the sight grows clear as death draws near,
And looks into futurity."

THE CONFESSION.

I WAS betrayed, and cruelly undone.
Smitten to anguish in my sorest part,
And so disgusted with all human life,
That curses came spontaneous to my lips :
I cursed the day—I cursed my fellow-men ;
I cursed my God, that made so bad a world.
Goaded to frenzy, by excess of pain,
I tore my hair,—I dashed my bleeding head
Against a wall ; sobbed, wept, and gnashed my teeth.
I howled anathemas against myself
For being man, and living on the earth.
When suddenly a sweet and heavenly calm
Fell on my spirit ; and a mild clear light
Diffused itself about me where I stood ;
And I was conscious of a visible power
Unutterably great, divinely good ;

And a voice spake, not angrily, but sad :

*“Weak and unjust! Thou hast blasphemed thy God ;
God, whom thou knowest not. Thou hast maligned
Thy fellow-men. Live, till thou knowest both.”*

The awful glory stole away my sense ;

Th’ excess of splendour dazzled my dim eyes ;

The clear words made me dumb : and for a while

Torpid and clod-like on the earth I lay,

Till th’ ineffable brightness disappeared.

And when I wakened, life was misery ;

Burden too mighty for my flesh to bear.

“Live, till I know my God! That might I, well ;

But live in sorrow till I know mankind ?

Heavy the curse! But if it must be borne,

Let me gain knowledge quickly, and so die!”

Long did I live. One hundred years of time

I held the faith that all my people held ;

Observed their laws, and to a God of FEAR

Knelt down in awe, and worshipped His dread name.

But still I lived, and cursed the weary days ;

And had no love or reverence for my kind.

And still my pain grew with my discontent,

That I could not release myself, and die.

Youth in my limbs, but age upon my heart,
I roamed the earth. I dwelt among the Greeks :
I saw, well pleased, the majesty of life ;
The power of beauty, and the sense of joy ;
The physical grandeur of the earth and heaven.
But God himself was stranger to my thought :
I had a worship, but no inward faith ;
I prayed to gods of human lineament,
Emblems of natural forces and desires ;
I filled the woods with visionary shapes ;
Peopled the hills, the vales, the rocks, the streams,
The dark caves, and the sunny mountain-tops
With forms of beauty ; and conversed with them
Upon unseen, unreal phantasies,
Until they seemed so palpable to sight,
So like to men in passion, vice, and crime,
I loathed, and shuddered, and abhorred them all ;—
Nor knew in what abysm and hell of thought
To sink remembrance. And I lived—and lived—
Longer than hope ; and still I could not die.

Then far away into the burning east
I bent my steps. And at one drowsy noon,

Under a palm-tree shade, beside a well
Sat down, and groaned in bitterness of grief
That God was still an alien to my soul.
I cast my limbs upon the feverish ground,
And lay upon my face ; and with my tears
Moistened the dust around me, praying still
That I might die ; for I was sear of heart,
Old, miserably old, and most forlorn.
Thus lay I from the noon into the night,
And from the night into the sudden dawn ;
And all that day I batted on my tears.
When, lo ! there came a pilgrim by the way ;
A pale, deject, and wiry-featured wretch ;
With hands all sinewy, like a parrot's claws,
Thin lips, bright eyes, sunk cheeks, and grizzled hair.
There was a comfort in his hideousness,
As he sat down and gazed upon my grief,
And gave me pity, and contemptuous cheer.
“ Brother,” he said, “ why what a fool art thou !
Neither in time, nor in eternity,
Neither in God, in nature, nor in man,
Is there aught worth the weeping of an hour.
’T is good to run, but better far to walk ;

'Tis good to walk, but better to sit still ;
'T is good to stand, and wake, but better far
To lie and sleep, untroubled by a dream ;
'T is good to be when thought has been destroyed ;
Better, far better, never to have been.
The grass is happy ; happier is the stone.
Highest of good is rest ; rest so sublime,
So deep, so thorough, as to seem like death.
Be rest thy God. Let the winds moan, not thou ;
Let the skies weep, but shed not thou a tear ;
And sleep and fast thy troublous life away
In one most happy and incessant calm,
Till sweet annihilation blots thee out.
This is religion—this the only faith :
Bliss is absorption—heaven is nothingness."
He led me with his eye,—I followed him ;
And I became a dull, insensate lump,
And dozed in Budha's temples night and day ;
I bruised in mortar of my selfishness
All thoughts, all feeling, all desire, all vice,
All virtue, into one amorphous mass
Of apathy, and idiocy, and sloth.
How long I wallowed in this senseless sty

I never knew ; I was but half alive,
And had no memory of time or change,
Only at intervals a grievous pain.

I was aroused at last, and scourged with whips,
Kicked, beaten, spat on, cast into the mire.
Change had come o'er the places where I dwelt ;
There was new law for men, new faith for God ;
The conqueror's sword had passed upon the plain,
And what was spared did homage for its life.
God and his Prophet were the Lords of earth.
And suddenly awaked, I found that I,
Even I, was living ; that the world was new,
Though I was old, most lamentably old,
But still condemned to mingle with my kind,
And choose my faith. I did as others did ;
Learned the new law, and thought I served my God.
I served him not. Obedience blind, inept,
Unthinking, dull, insensate, was the law :
Fate lorded over will ; necessity
Turned men into machines. I cast my eyes
Despairing still upon the firmament,
Jewelled with worlds, and reasoned with myself,

If Fate or Will upheld them in their place ;
And, in the infinite madness of my brain,
Conceived that each, majestic as it shone,
Was filled with misery and doubt like mine.
A rolling Hell set in the sky to preach
To other hells, as wretched as itself,
The dreadful power, the boundlessness of ill.
Long did I struggle with this deep despair,
And vehemently pray, both morn and night,
That I might be extinguished utterly ;
That I might lay upon the arid soil
My lifeless bones, to feed the hungry roots
Of hemlock or mandragora with lime ;
That I at least might end my doubts in death ;
Though Death were but the gate to other worlds
Of spiritual anguish, more intense than this.

Another change came over me. Ere long
I wandered forth o'er Asiatic plains ;
Dwelt with the lizard in the crumbling halls
Of antique cities desolate, whose names
Were lost from memory. I shared the tent
Of roving spearmen and banditti fierce,

So utter old and sad, that murderous thieves
Took pity on my want and misery,
And spake me kindly, even when they loathed.
I lay beneath the palms at set of sun,
And wished that ravenous and night-prowling beasts
Would tear me limb from limb before the dawn.
I crossed great deserts in the burning heat,
Forded strong rivers, pierced through trackless woods—
A thing so utter sad, that the lean wolves
Fled terror-smitten when they met my glance,
And hungry serpents hissed and slunk away.
How long the madness burned 't were vain to tell;
Time and Eternity seemed one to me.
But in a bright and lovely summer's morn
I felt my limbs supple and strong again,
As in my youth, ere grief and I were friends.
Far had I journeyed to an eastern clime,
'Mid an old people, and an older faith.
I found some comfort, yet I could not die.
Still was obedience law: childish and calm,
Not to a blind and cruel destiny,
But to the wise irrevocable rule
Of a just Deity, that made mankind,

And sent his clay vicegerents to the earth
To rule them justly, if they would submit
To walk for ever in the same dull track,
To live and act, from barren age to age,
In the same fashion, with the same desires,
Same thoughts, same habits, and same prejudice ;
More dull and senseless than a stagnant mire
That even in its rottenness and sloth
Breeds something novel from its fruitful slime ;—
But they bred nothing—only their dull selves ;
And I despised them—hated them—and lived,
And knew by living I was still accursed,
And loved not God, nor yet my fellow-men.

There was no resting here : my fiery soul
Felt mortal anguish to co-herd with theirs.
I went again a wanderer o'er the earth,
Taking no heed of time, or place, or change,
But weary, weary, abject, and forlorn.

One year ago—'t was but one little year—
I entered, in my rags and squalidness,
A large, fair city of the populous west :
The church-bells rang ; the people were astir,

In countless multitudes, through all the streets;
Gay banners flaunted in the morning air,
And waves of music, from the Gothic porch
Of a cathedral, rushed in floods divine;
Now in full tidal flow, and now in ebb,
So grand, so awe-inspiring, that even I,
Despised, abandoned, abject, and abhorred,
Felt holy joy to listen to the sound
Which soothed my spirit with melodious peace.
I listened long; for my sad heart was full.—
I could have floated painlessly to death,
And blessed the music with my latest sigh,—
But that a sudden plucking at the hem,
All mire-bedraggled, of my tattered robe.
Caused me to turn: I saw a fair young face,
Sweet even as hers who loved me in her youth—
She whom I now, for the first time, forgave
For wrongs inflicted on my trusting heart.
Like—but unlike; lovely—yet not so fair;
And at my miserable feet she knelt
To crave my blessing:—"Blessing! and from me?
From me, the vilest, meanest of mankind?"—
"Ay, and from thee!" she said; "we know thee well;
Thou hast long suffered—thou'rt a saint of God."

And all the people, gathering round about,
Joined in her supplication ; kneeling down,
To crave my blessing—not in mockery,
But with deep reverence. Strange it seemed that I
Who had not known for spanless gulfs of time
What blessing meant, should have the power to bless.
I could but bless her ; for I felt my heart
Glow with dear memories forgotten long,
Brought back upon me by her mild sweet face.
The burden of my long-enduring pain
Was lightened by that pity, and I wept ;
And every tear I shed became to me
Relief and joy, as, with an earnest voice,
I blessed the people, showing them the while
My own unworthiness more great than theirs—
Unmeet my lips to utter words of peace
Who long had cursed myself and all my kind.

And now the hoary portals opening wide,
Forth issued an array of robèd priests,
In white and scarlet ; boys with censers flung
Rich incense in the air ; while others hymned,
With sweet clear voice, “ Hosanna to the Lord.”
And all the people knelt, and with them I.

The solemn music filled the pliant air,
And a religious sense was wafted round,—
Sense superadded, and unfelt before.
I could not rise : my cramped and weary joints
Seemed bloodless as the stones on which I knelt ;
And the procession and the people passed,
In all their gorgeousness ;—and I was left
To my own strength, to follow if I list,
Or lie upon the pavement and expire.
I rose. I felt within my secret soul
More peace than had been mine since the great curse
Was spoken by the Presence for my sin.
But as I could not stay to be a saint,
And bear the flattery of the ignorant,
With a new courage I endued my heart,
And prayed for strength, and went upon my way.

Here am I now. In thy serene abode
I've gained new comfort from thy reverend lips,
And learned the secret of my destiny.
'Twas thou that taught me from the blessed Book
That God was Love ; and that those served Him best
Who loved their fellows, and obeyed the law

Sublime but easy, preached by Him who died
To seal his doctrine by his guiltless blood.

I have not long to live. My race is run :
I would live longer were it but to preach
To other souls as wretched as my own,
The mighty truth, that God is Love indeed,
But feel within me that mine hour is come.
I shall not see the morning dawn again :
My sin is pardoned—I shall die in peace.
Bury me by myself—under a cross,
And put a fair white tombstone o'er my grave.
Place on it name, nor date, nor words, save these :
“ He learned in suffering that God was Love,
And died in hope.” Bear with me for a while ;
I shall not die ere I have slept an hour.
Mine eyes are weary : let me close them now ;
I shall awake to bless thee and depart.
Visions of glory throng upon my soul :
Brother, farewell. I'll see thee yet again,
Here and hereafter. Let me slumber now.

THE CHILD AND THE MOURNERS.

A LITTLE child, beneath a tree
Sat and chanted cheerily
A little song, a pleasant song,
Which was—she sang it all day long—
“ When the wind blows the blossoms fall ;
But a good God reigns over all.”

There passed a lady by the way,
Moaning in the face of day :
There were tears upon her cheek,
Grief in her heart too great to speak ;
Her husband died but yester-morn,
And left her in the world forlorn.

She stopped and listened to the child
That looked to heaven, and singing, smiled ;
And saw not for her own despair,
Another lady, young and fair,
Who also passing, stopped to hear
The infant's anthem ringing clear.

For she but few sad days before
Had lost the little babe she bore ;
And grief was heavy at her soul
As that sweet memory o'er her stole,
And showed how bright had been the Past,
The Present drear and overcast.

And as they stood beneath the tree
Listening, soothed and placidly,
A youth came by, whose sunken eyes
Spake of a load of miseries ;
And he, arrested like the twain,
Stopped to listen to the strain.

Death had bowed the youthful head
Of his bride beloved, his bride unwed :
Her marriage robes were fitted on,
Her fair young face with blushes shone,
When the destroyer smote her low,
And changed the lover's bliss to woe.

And these three listened to the song,
Silver-toned, and sweet, and strong,
Which that child, the livelong day,
Chanted to itself in play :

“ When the wind blows the blossoms fall,
But a good God reigns over all.”

The widow's lips impulsive moved ;
The mother's grief, tho' unreprieved,
Softened, as her trembling tongue
Repeated what the infant sung ;
And the sad lover, with a start,
Comed it over to his heart.

And though the child—if child it were,
And not a seraph sitting there—
Was seen no more, the sorrowing three
Went on their way resignedly,
The song still ringing in their ears—
Was it music of the spheres ?

Who shall tell ? They did not know.
But in the midst of deepest woe
The strain recurred when sorrow grew,
To warn them, and console them too :
“ When the wind blows the blossoms fall,
But a good God reigns over all.”





LOVE OR WISDOM ?

AN EXAMINATION.

WERE I so mad as I have been of yore
I would be happy : mad with Beauty's eyes ;
Mad with the voice of one I could adore,
And the sweet music of her soft replies :
Mad with the charms of a serene bright face ;
Possessed, and inly haunted by the grace
Of some fair creature, in her form and mind
The star and paragon of all her kind.

For, if I were so happy-mad again,
I'd live anew. I'd feed upon delights ;
I'd find enraptured frenzy in a pain ;
I'd roam, dreaming awake, through summer nights,
And hear a murmuring music in the air,
Which I would harmonize into a word—
That word her name. I'd kneel, with forehead bare,
Out in the solemn woods, unseen, unheard,



And call on earth to bless her as she trod ;
Sweet winds to fan her, skies to drop her joy ;
And would invoke the providence of God
To keep her harmless, nor let care annoy,
Nor sorrow vex, nor pleasure pall on sense ;
My being hers, hers mine, and both intense
With a full, throbbing, rapturous, infinite bliss
In being loved. For madness such as this,
I'd give up wisdom and her castled clouds.
I would unlearn all I have learned ; give back
Experience, and the blazoning breath of crowds
Wafting Fame's incense forward on my track.
I would forego all hope, and all desire
But one : that life might be a blank white page,
Where Fate might write *one* word of heavenly fire—
LOVE : that so breathing the delicious rage,
My veins might run it, and my brain might take
That for sole impulse, and for Love's sweet sake
Nature put on her bridal robes, and blush
Beauty upon me from each tree and flower ;
And in her nightly gleam, her morning flush,
Her buzzing noon, and evening's golden hour,
Converse with me upon the one great theme
With all her voices ; meadow, mountain, stream,

Forest and ocean, uttering but one sound
Ever and ever as the world went round,
The stars repeating it, with meanings rife,
And that word LOVE ;—this would be living life.

For why? And wert thou in that fiery craze
So happy, that thou wouldst indeed recall
What thou hast seen, done, suffered in the days
When thy blood boiled, and thou wert passion all?
Poor fool! forgetful of departed woes,
Past misery, anguish, discontent, and tears;
Mindful alone of pleasure and repose,
Seen through the wave of the refractive years
In colours not their own. When Love was thine,
Wert thou not heart-sore? Didst thou not repine
For something that was past, or was to come?
Was not that day as wearisome as this?
Its music stale? Its friendly voices dumb,
And thou a dreamer of remoter bliss?
Poor fool! to-morrow thou wilt bless to-day,
And wish it back; and with a new disgust
Think of the newest time, till fled away
It leaves thee memory, and a fresh mistrust.
And so thou journeyest, thankless to the dust.

Be not so mad as thou hast been of yore,
Yet happier far. Is not the Now thine own?
Now ever present? *now* for evermore?
Now always with thee, but its worth unknown,
Or lightly thought of? Lay its mystery bare,
And learn the mighty secret how to live;—
Learn that if mind be pure, the world is fair;
And that the outer sunshine cannot give
Such Warmth, and Joy, and Beauty, as the light
Cast by the inner spirit infinite,
When it is clear from every sensual stain.
Simple and thankful,—live not thou in vain,
Nor hurry to the goal with desperate haste
To make the present past, and both a waste.

THE DROP OF AMBROSIA.

“WHITHER away? whither away,
With thine eyes through the distance looking so keen?
The road is narrow, and is not long;
And if thou wouldst but awhile delay,
I would show thee sights thou hast not seen.
And thou shouldst hear a voice of song,
And thou shouldst learn of things unknown,
And live a double and fuller life.
Whither away? I prithee stay, —
There are angels near; thou’rt not alone—
The very air is with beauty rife.
The night is lovely, fair is the day,
Why this hurry to travel away,
To close thy journey, to shut thy book?
Why at the end wilt thou ever look?
Why on the tide wilt thou ever think,
And neglect the flowrets on the brink?”

He said in answer to my cries,
“Let me alone, nor vex my soul;

I've set my mind on a glittering prize
That I see midway towards the goal.
It shines, 'mid cloud on the mountain-top
A bright, divine, ambrosial drop.
Sad, till I grasp it, the time appears ;
Into hours the weeks I'd pack,
Compress the lingering, drawing years
To months, and never wish them back.
Why should I stay ? What boots delay ?
What do I care for an angel's song ?
For the stars of night, or the flowers of day,
When lingering would the hours prolong ?
Let me alone : my mind and heart
Are full of a joy thou canst not see,
And each impediment is pain ;
Thy very talk is grief to me.
Let me away. Why should I stay,
Wasting time by answering thee ?"

"Already," said I, "thy prime is past,
Thy flush of youth, thy warmth of noon,
And many delights which the sunshine cast,
Must wither away beneath the moon.

The path thou goest is short at best ;
And between thine eyes and the bliss they crave,
To trip thy feet in their course so fleet,
May there not be an open grave ?
Why wilt thou hurry towards the end ?
There are pleasant fields on the highway-side,
Bowers whence the hymns of Love ascend,
And rivers rolling a joyous tide,
In which to lave the weary limbs
Is bliss beyond the ambrosial drop,
Which, far away, 'mid storm and dark,
Thou seest upon the mountain-top.
Straight is the path to the yawning tomb ;
But we may linger on the road,
And turn to the left, and turn to the right,
To enjoy the kindly gifts of God.
I would not live *my* life so soon,
I would not spend it on *one* desire,
Nor in such fearful haste as thine
Exhaust the fuel of its fire."

Vain was my speech: he closed his ears —
Straight on he rushed, nor looked behind.
He saw afar his glittering star,

The prize for which his spirit pined.
On every side were stars as fair—
Fairer, I thought ; and drops of joy,
Divinest given to mortal man,
To cheer of his life the little span,
And sanctify its right employ.
He saw them not, but ran his race
With a speed that passion alone could give ;
Grew hard and grey on his narrow way,
And spent his life ere he learned to live.
And I saw before he reached his prize,
That he sunk in the grave before my eyes.

THE FOLLOWER.

I.

“ WHY dost thou look so sad and wan?
And why art thou so wo-begone?
Why dost thou mutter words of fear?
Do I not love thee, father dear?
Is not earth a place of joy?
Tell me, father, tell thy boy.”

II.

“ There is a fiend doth follow me ;
A fearful fiend thou canst not see—
But I behold him. Day or night
He is not absent from my sight :
I know thou lovest me, O my child,—
But this demon drives me wild.

III.

“ The world was once both good and fair,
There was a glory in the air,
When my heart was pure and young,
By guilt and misery unwrung ;
But a demon such as this,
Makes an agony of bliss.

IV.

“ He besets my daily path,
I am the victim of his wrath :
He smears his fingers o'er my meat,
And poisons every thing I eat ;
Puts fatal acid in my drink—
Oh, it is misery to think !

V.

“ He lies beside me in my bed :
He places thorns beneath my head :
He sits upon my suffering breast,
And sends the dreams that spoil my rest :
He tracks my steps where'er I stray,
And gibes and mocks me night and day.

VI.

“When sympathetic friends condole,
And whisper comfort to my soul,
This spiteful devil comes to and fro,
And turns each friend into a foe ;
Perverts my comfort into pain,
Maddening my heart and brain.

VII.

“When I think I’m all alone,
I start to hear his mocking groan :
I see his fearful face and eyes,—
That hellish face, which multiplies,
And fills the room from roof to floor
With scowling demons evermore.

VIII.

“Cruel is he. His power is great.
He pursues me. He is fate.
If I look to heaven, and pray,
I see his dreadful shape midway.
And ev’n the placid stars assume
His sneering likeness in the gloom.

IX.

“He leads my steps to dark, deep pools,
And says, none live but wretched fools.
He puts sharp weapons in my sight,
And shows me laudanum, ruby bright,
And whispers, if I like him not,
How soon my freedom may be got.

X.

“At times I think my heart will break,
But I resist him for thy sake:
His power departs when thou art near—
Of thy sweet face he stands in fear;
And if thou 'lt love me, O my boy,
I 'll grapple with him, and destroy.”

XI.

“Father, I love thee. I will pray
For strength to drive this fiend away.
And if thou wilt be bold of heart,
I know the demon will depart;
And I will walk with thee abroad,
And scare him with the name of God.

XII.

“I’ll lie beside thee in the night,
He shall not come to plague thy sight.
Why should his face fill up the skies
With hideousness and mockeries?
There are fair faces up in heaven,
That always smile on the forgiven.

XIII.

“They beam upon us: they are strong:
This fiend shall not resist them long.
We’ll see them in the stars and moon.
We’ll see them in the sun at noon;
We’ll see them in the leaves and flowers,
And hear them singing ’mid the bowers.

XIV.

“He is but one. Why should we fear
When smiling angels fill the sphere?
And one among them known to thee—
Chief angel of *my* memory—
My mother, dead and gone before.”—
“Talk thus, my child, I’ll fear no more.

XV.

“Thy heart is pure, thy speech is mild,
I gain instruction from a child:
The fiend that haunts me must depart,—
He cannot vex me where thou art—
Thy mother’s memory! God! and thee!
The fiend has fled—my soul is free.”

LET US ALONE.

MANY—and yet our fate is one,
And little after all we crave—
Enjoyment of the common sun,
Fair passage to the common grave ;
Our bread and fire, our plain attire,
The free possession of our own :
Rulers be wise, and lords and kings,
Let us alone—let us alone.

We have a faith, we have a law ;
A faith in God, a hope in man ;
And own, with reverence and awe,
Love universal as His plan.
To Charity we bow the knee,
The earth's refiner and our own :
Bigots, and fighters about words,
Let us alone—let us alone.

The world is the abode of men,
And not of demons stark and blind ;
And Eden's self might bloom again
If men did justice to mankind.

We want no more of Nature's store
Than Nature meant to be our own :
Masters, and gerents of the earth,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Your meddling brought us grief and care,
And added misery day by day ;
We're not so foolish as we were,
Nor fashioned of such ductile clay ;
Your petty jars, your wicked wars,
Have lost their charm, the gilding's gone :
Victorious marshals, vaulting kings,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Though dwellers in a little isle,
We bear no hate to other lands,
And think that all the earth might smile,
If we and others joined our hands.
In wrong or right, why should we fight ?
We'll war no more—we're wiser grown :

Quibblers, and stirrers up of hate,
Let us alone—let us alone.

White man or black, to us alike ;
Foemen of no men, we will live.
We will not lift our hands to strike,
Or evil for advantage give.
Our hands are free to earn their fee,
Our tongues to let the truth be known :
So despots, knaves, and foes of right,
Let us alone—let us alone.

Great are our destinies : our task,
Long since begun, shall never end
While suffering has a boon to ask,
Or truth needs spokesmen to defend ;
While vice or crime pollute the time,
While nations bleed, or patriots groan :—
Rulers be wise, and kings and priests,
Let us alone—let us alone.





MELODIES AND MYSTERIES.

WOULDST thou know what the blithe bird pipeth,
High in the morning air?
Wouldst thou know what the bright stream singeth,
Rippling o'er pebbles bare?
Sorrow the mystery shall teach thee,
And the words declare.

Wouldst thou find in the rose's blossom
More than thy fellows find?
More in the fragrance of the lily
Than odour on the wind?
Love Nature, and her smallest atoms
Shall whisper to thy mind.

Wouldst thou know what the moon discourseth
To the docile sea?
Wouldst hear the echoes of the music
Of the far infinity?



Sorrow shall ope the founts of knowledge,
And heaven shall sing to thee.

Wouldst thou see through the riddle of Being
Further than others can ?

Sorrow shall give thine eyes new lustre
To simplify the plan ;
And love of God and thy kind shall aid thee
To end what it began.

To Love and Sorrow all Nature speaketh ;
If the riddle be read,
They the best can see through darkness
Each divergent thread
Of its mazy texture, and discover
Whence the ravel spread.

Love and Sorrow are sympathetic
With the earth and skies ;
Their touch from the harp of Nature bringeth
The hidden melodies ;
To them the eternal chords for ever
Vibrate in harmonies.

THE OUT-COMER AND THE IN-GOER.

FOR Ernest was a palace built,
A palace beautiful to see ;
Marble porched, and cedar chambered,
Hung with damask drapery ;
Bossed with ornaments of silver,
Interlaid with gems and gold ;
Filled with carvings, from cathedrals
Rescued in the days of old ;
Eloquent with books and pictures,
All that luxury could afford ;
Warm with statues that Pygmalion
Might have fashioned — and adored.
In his forest glades and vistas
Lovely were the light and gloom ;
Fountains sparkled in his gardens,
And exotics breathed perfume.

With him to that lordly palace
Went the friend who loved him best,

In good fortune unexalted,
In misfortune undepressed.
Little recked that friend of grandeur;
Dearer far to him than all
Wealth could offer, were the rose-buds
Growing on the garden-wall.
Dearer far were simple pleasures,
And the charms by Nature spread,
Than all gauds of power and splendour,
Heaped upon their favourite's head.
Plain was he in speech and raiment,
Humble-minded, and imbued
With a daily love of virtue,
And a daily gratitude.

Ere these palace-halls received them,
Steadfast was the faith they bore :
No estrangement came between them,
Darkening their study door.
Ernest in his friend's communion
Loved himself and all his kind,
Cherishing a loving nature,
Tutored by a happy mind,

Rich and poor were equal brothers,
In that heart, too pure to hold
Pride of lineage or of station,
Or the vanity of gold.
Never chanced it, in that season,
That he formed a thought unjust
Of the meanest fellow-mortal
Fashioned of a common dust.

But his palace somewhat changed him ;
Rose-buds gathered—early walks—
Sunset roamings—nightly musings—
Mystic philosophic talks—
Nothing as of old engrossed him ;
And the promptings of his friend
Fell upon his sated spirit,
Not to guide him, but offend.
Daily grew the chilling coolness,
Till, ere many months had flown,
Ernest shut his door upon him,
And resolved to live alone :
And retreating 'mid his splendour
Rooted out all love he bore

For that friend, so true, so noble,
Banished, lost for evermore.

Scarcely had that friend departed,
Pained and pensive, but resigned,
When another sought the palace,
More accordant to his mind.
He in Ernest's lordly chambers
Sat, and called him first of men ;
Praised his pictures and his statues,
Flattered him with tongue and pen ;
Pressed the milk of human kindness
From his bosom cold and sere,
Taught him to be harsh and cruel,
Proud, disdainful, and austere ;
Filled him up with vain inflation,
And contempt for meaner clay,
As if *he* were born to govern,
It to flatter and obey.

Sometimes on his lonely pillow,
When his conscience showed the truth,
He deplored his blind estrangement
From the comrade of his youth ;

But the daylight chilled the current
Of that feeling, and it froze
Hard enough to bear the burden
Of such memories as those.
And all day, in gloomy grandeur,
In his corridors and halls,
Looking at his old escutcheons,
And the portraits on the walls,
He and his companion wandered,
Calm of eye, with lips upcurled,
Aliens to the worth and goodness,
And the beauty of the world.

Wintry winds of human anguish,
Blowing round them day and night,
Never moved them—never clouded
Their serenity of light.
They were made of choice material,
Tempest-proof, from lightning free,
And the world, its joys and sorrows,
Was to them a shipless sea,
Dark, unfathomable, trackless,
Far beyond their care or ken,

Save at times, when ostentation
Brought them to the gaze of men ;
But ev'n this was painful to them :
Man was cold, and earth was wide ;—
'They preferred the warm seclusion
Of their apathy and pride.

Who was he, the first out-goer ?
He was HUMAN SYMPATHY ;
And the in-comer that displaced him ?
He was WORLDLY VANITY.
With the first *Religion* vanished,
Charity, and *Faith in Man*,
And the genial *Lore of Nature*,
Boundless as Creation's plan.
With the second entered *Hatred*,
Harsh Intolerance, and *Scorn* :—
Ernest in his life's cold evening
Saw the error of his morn—
Saw his error and deplored it,
And upon his death-bed lain,
Prayed for mercy, while confessing,
Dying, he had lived in vain.

CLEON AND I.

CLEON hath a million acres,
Ne'er a one have I ;
Cleon dwelleth in a palace,
In a cottage I :
Cleon hath a dozen fortunes,
Not a penny I ;
Yet the poorer of the twain is
Cleon, and not I.

Cleon, true, possesseth acres,
But the landscape I ;
Half the charms to me it yieldeth
Money cannot buy.
Cleon harbours sloth and dulness,
Freshening vigour I ;
He in velvet, I in fustian,
Richer man am I.

Cleon is a slave to grandeur,
Free as thought am I ;
Cleon fees a score of doctors,
Need of none have I :
Wealth-surrounded, care-environed,
Cleon fears to die ;
Death may come, he 'll find me ready,
Happier man am I.

Cleon sees no charms in Nature,
In a daisy I ;
Cleon hears no anthems ringing
In the sea and sky ;
Nature sings to me for ever,
Earnest listener I ;
State for state, with all attendants,
Who would change ?—Not I.

THE LITTLE MOLES.

When grasping tyranny offends,
Or angry bigots frown ;
When rulers plot for selfish ends
To keep the people down ;
When statesmen form unholy league
To drive the world to war ;
When knaves in palaces intrigue
For ribbons or a star ;
We raise our heads—survey their deeds,
And cheerily reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground
There's sunshine in the sky.

When canting hypocrites combine
To curb a free man's thought,
And hold all doctrine undivine
That holds their canting naught ;

When round their narrow pale they plod,
And scornfully assume
That all without are cursed of God,
And justify the doom :—
We think of God's eternal love
And strong in hope reply,
*Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There 's sunshine in the sky.*

When greedy authors wield the pen
To please the vulgar town,
Depict great thieves as injured men
And heroes of renown—
Pander to prejudice unclean,
Apologize for crime,
And daub the vices of the mean
With flattery like slime :
For MILTON's craft—for SHAKSPERE's tongue
We blush, but yet reply,
*Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There 's sunshine in the sky.*

When smug philosophers survey
The various climes of earth,

And mourn, poor sagelings of a day !
Its too prolific birth ;
And prove by figure, rule, and plan,
The large fair world too small
To feed the multitudes of man
That flourish on its ball :
We view the vineyards on the hills,
Or corn-fields waving high ;—
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There's sunshine in the sky.

When men cōplain of human kind
In misanthropic mood,
And thinking evil things, grow blind
To presence of the good ;
When, walled in prejudices strong,
They urge that evermore
The world is fated to go wrong
For going wrong before :
We feel the truths they cannot feel,
And smile as we reply,
Grub, little moles, grub under ground,
There's sunshine in the sky.

IMOGEN'S JOURNEY.

THE MESMERIST AND THE CLAIRVOYANTE.

*How dost travel, Imogen,
When the trance upon thee lies?
Lo! I shed the influence o'er thee—
How dost travel to the skies?*

“On a wonder working steed,
Like the steed in the eastern tale;
I mount his back—I try his speed—
I guide him over hill and dale,
Deftly ever I hold the reins,
And sit in the saddle haughtily;
Over the mountains and over the plains,
Over the land and over the sea.”

*Imogen, I know thou wanderest
At thy pleasure through the air ;
Canst thou tell what thou hast witnessed,
And thy mysteries declare ?*

“ Much I see
Lovingly,—
I feast on the beauty of the earth,
In its sadness, in its mirth,
In its decay, and in its bloom,
In its splendour, in its gloom ;
To every clime remote or near
I soar in my saddle and never fear.

“ Much I see
Mournfully,—
Want and ignorance and strife,
And the agonies of death and life ;
Intemperance mowing its victims down
In countless hosts through city and town ;
And hapless infants, newly born,
Cast on the world to shame and scorn ;

Taught to lie, to steal, to swear,
Nurtured in hatred and despair,
Trained in obedience, reckless, and blind
To the worst passions of their kind.

“Much I see
Indignantly,—
The prosperous evil, the suffering good ;
And battenning, fattening,
Fawning, lying,
God denying,
Pestilent ingratitude.
Sons bringing shame to a father's cheek,
And daughter's doing their mothers wrong ;
The strong man trampling on the weak,
The weak man worshipping the strong ;
The white man selling the black for a slave
And quoting scripture in his defence,
And giving the money—the holy knave—
In support of pulpit eloquence :
Harsh intolerant Bigotry
Taking the name of Charity ;
And Vice, in a masquerading dress,
White robed like virgin loveliness,

Sitting in Virtue's seat, unchallenged,
And passing herself in all men's sight
As a radiant creature
In form and feature,
A visitant of love and light ;—
Tyrants ruling,
Wise men fooling,
And stolid Ignorance preaching and schooling :
All this I see
Most mournfully,
And haste to descend to the Earth again,
And rest on the level ground with men.

“ But in my trance of yesterday
I was travelling far away ;
Far away in the air upborne,
I, clear-seeing Imogen,
Lost myself in the depths serene
Twelve hours eastward of the morn.
The full round Earth beneath me lay
A large bright orb of silvery gray,
The bi-centuple of the moon ;
I heard her rolling on her way,

Her tidal oceans pealing a tune,
Sea with sea,
Harmoniously,
Through the dread Infinity.
And a living voice spake to my soul,
As I watched the mighty planet roll ;—
An angel of another sphere,
An alien and a wanderer here ;
And spirit to spirit, mind to mind,—
I to him and he to me—
We spoke together bodilessly,
On the deeds of human kind.

“ ‘ Oh lovely is your world,’ he said ;
‘ Behold the glory round it spread,
Behold its oceans, how they shine
Suffused with radiance divine :
Its teeming continents behold—
Its mountain summits fired with gold ;
Its gleaming poles of purest white,
Its tropics bathed in fruitful light ;
A lovely world, a gorgeous plan—
How fares the brotherhood of man ?’

“ ‘The brotherhood of man ?’ said I,
Mingling a whisper and a sigh :—
‘Alas, the Earth, though old in time,
Is young in wisdom :—Brotherhood ?—
There is no land in any clime
Where even the word is understood :—
Look below at yon fair isles,
Laving themselves in Ocean’s smiles.—
They rule the Earth, yet cannot teach
The simple truth thy words convey,—
Though ever the few dissuade, and preach,
Ever the many fight and slay.’

“ ‘Blind creatures,’ said the voice to me,
‘If they know not Charity—
But surely they have learned the truth
That God is love—and growing wise,
They study from their tenderest youth
That holiest of mysteries ?’

“ ‘They know it not,’ I made reply,
‘Of all the swarms that live and die

Upon that wide revolving ball,
The pettiest fraction of them all
Has heard that truth :—and of those few
Though hundreds *think*, the units *do*.
Aliens, foes, estranged from birth,
Are the nations of the earth ;
One to the east of a mountain cope,
Hates the one to the western slope ;
One to the left bank of a river,
Pursues with its deadly wrath for ever
The one that prospers on the right,
And works for ever to its despire ;
And to the earth's extremest bound,
Brotherhood is nowhere found.'

“ ‘ But is there none,’ said the voice, “ to show
‘ The wrong, the shame, the guilt, the woe,
The fearful madness of such crime?
Is there none with a soul sublime
To open their hearts that they may see
That Love is the law of infinity,
The dominant chord of the mighty seven
That form the harmonies of heaven ?’

‘ Many to teach, but few to hear.
Though scant the boundaries of our sphere,
Truth goes slowly over the zones,
And stumbles over pebble stones.
The laziest worm that ever crept,
Although at each remove it slept,
Would measure the girth of the rolling earth
Ten times o’er, in a tithe of the time
It takes slow-footed Truth to climb
The dense obstructions in its course,
Raised by folly, fraud, or force,
And circle it once from pole to pole ;
Never yet, thou wandering soul,
Has one great Truth pierced through the crust
Of universal human dust.’

“ ‘ It cannot be,’ said the voice again :
‘ Was there never born ’mong men
Th’ incarnate God ?’ ‘ Alas !’ I said,
‘ Look at the Earth—behold it spread
Its countless regions to the day ;
Behold—I’ll show thee in the ray,
Every little speck of land

Where the truth has made a stand—
I could cover them with my hand.

“ ‘ See yon little continent,
And close beside it other two
Of aspect more magnificent,
And large dimensions, looming through
An atmosphere of radiant blue :
The smallest spot alone has heard
The great and civilizing word
That God is Love ; and even there
Men hate each other, and declare
Fierce war for difference of degree,
And shadows of divergency
On minor points, and dogmas dim,
That whether we cling to or let fall
Is of no account in the eyes of Him
Who gave a law beyond them all.

“ ‘ Ignorance is the lord below ;—
Hatred, Bigotry, and Scorn
Do his bidding, and scatter woe

On the climates of the morn :
Do his bidding and high behest
On the regions of the west,
Obey his rules from north to south,
And take their orders from his mouth.'

“ ‘ Farewell !’ said the voice of the upper air,
‘ I’ll change my track, I’ll go not there ;
To other planets I will roam,
Where Love and Knowledge find a home.’
‘ Farewell !’ said I, ‘ thou wandering sprite,
I must return to earth ere night,
And bear for awhile, as best I can,
The cold, dull ignorance of man.’ ”

* * * * *

Now thou’rt wakened, Imogen,
Dost thou know where thou hast been ?
“ No,” she said, and rubbed her eyes,
And looked around her with surprise,

“I have slept—and I have heard—
Something—nothing—who can tell?
Waking memory knows no word
And has no sense of what befel.
But when again thy fingers pour
The influence through me, if it chance
That I can summon up once more
The lost ideas of my trance,
I'll tell thee truly what I see,
Wise or foolish, as may be.”

TWO MYSTERIES.

Two awful mysteries compass me around,
And follow me for ever as I go:
I see, yet see them not. I know they *are*,
And that they change more rapidly than thought,
Yet feel 'mid variability that change,
While it affects them, leaves them still the same.
Sane, I enjoy them both—both are myself:
Insane, I fly them, but they haunt me still:
Two mysteries and yet one—one infinite.
Two undistinguished points in space and time,
Ever effaced and ever permanent.
Two little atoms so magnificent
That all the past conspired to give them birth,
And all the mighty future hangs on one.
My Self, my Now; God's Self, God's Now;—so linked
That not Eternity can disentwine

One from the other. Both to be employed
So that their circle evermore shall stretch
Till suns, and systems, and whole firmaments
Shall seem but points commensurate with them,
And aye to widen ever and evermore,
Nearing the throne where the Eternal sits,
Is joy, love, knowledge, happiness divine—
Oh that the secret of their use was mine!

TOWN LYRICS,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "VOICES FROM THE CROWD," "VOICES FROM THE
MOUNTAINS," "LEGENDS OF THE ISLES,"
ETC. ETC.

"La muse est enfant des cités ;—
Et le poete doit etre un protestant sublime
Du droit et de l'humanité.

BARBIER.

LONDON :

D. BOGUE, 86 FLEET STREET.

MDCCCXLVIII.



LONDON :

VINEY & CO. PRINTERS AND ENGRAVERS,
PETERBOROUGH COURT, FLEET STREET.



TO

CHARLES DICKENS,

IN WHOSE PROSE POETRY ARE SO WELL INCULCATED
THE LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE TRUE, AND THE SENSE
OF MORAL DIGNITY IN THE HUMBLEST,

THE FOLLOWING EFFUSIONS,

ASPIRING TO EFFECT THE SAME OBJECTS,

ARE DEDICATED,

WITH THE HIGHEST ADMIRATION AND RESPECT,

BY HIS VERY SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

TOWN LYRICS.

	PAGE
STREET COMPANIONS	1
THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW	5
MARY AND LADY MARY; OR, NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOURS	9
FOLLOW YOUR LEADER. THE STORY OF A LIFE	13
ABOVE AND BELOW	16
JOHN LITTLEJOHN	19
THE POOR MAN'S BIRD	22
UNKNOWN ROMANCES	25
THE FLOATING STRAW. A THOUGHT IN THE PANIC, 1847	27
A QUESTION ANSWERED	29
WHAT MIGHT BE DONE	31
THE GOLDEN MADNESS	33
THE MOWERS. AN ANTICIPATION OF THE CHOLERA, 1848	37
SAID I TO MYSELF, SAID I	42
AN APPEAL TO PARIS.—1848	46
THOUGHTS	49
THE PHILOSOPHIST. A PORTRAIT	50

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
MOUNTAIN STREAMS. AN ASPIRATION FROM TOWN . . .	53
BARON BRAEMAR. A "TILT" WITH A GREAT DUKE . . .	56

THE DEATH BANQUET OF THE GIRONDINS, AND OTHER POEMS.

THE DEATH BANQUET OF THE GIRONDINS	61
THE KING AND THE NIGHTINGALES. A LEGEND OF HAVERING .	80
EVERMORE—NEVERMORE	84
THE TRUE COMPANION	86
WELCOME BACK	87
A LOVER'S FANCIES	89
THE NINE BATHERS	90
THE WATER TARANTELLA	97

TOWN LYRICS.

STREET COMPANIONS.

WHENE'ER through Gray's Inn porch I stray,
I meet a spirit by the way;
He wanders with me all alone,
And talks with me in under-tone.

The crowd is busy seeking gold,
It cannot see what I behold ;
I and the spirit pass along
Unknown, unnoticed, in the throng.

While on the grass the children run,
And maids go loitering in the sun,
I roam beneath the ancient trees,
And talk with him of mysteries.

The dull brick houses of the square,
The bustle of the thoroughfare,
The sounds, the sights, the crush of men,
Are present, but forgotten then.

I see them, but I heed them not,
I hear, but silence clothes the spot;
All voices die upon my brain
Except that spirit's in the lane.

He breathes to me his burning thought,
He utters words with wisdom fraught,
He tells me truly what I am—
I walk with mighty Verulam.

He goes with me through crowded ways,
A friend and mentor in the maze,
Through Chancery Lane to Lincoln's Inn,
To Fleet Street, through the moil and din.

I meet another spirit there,
A blind old man with forehead fair,
Who ever walks the right hand side,
Toward the fountain of St. Bride.

Amid the peal of jangling bells,
Or peoples' roar that falls and swells,
The whirl of wheels and tramp of steeds,
He talks to me of noble deeds.

I hear his voice above the crush,
As to and fro the people rush ;
Benign and calm, upon his face
Sits melancholy, robed in grace.

He hath no need of common eyes,
He sees the fields of Paradise;
He sees and pictures unto mine
A gorgeous vision, most divine.

He tells the story of the Fall,
He names the fiends in battle-call,
And shows my soul, in wonder dumb,
Heaven, Earth, and Pandemonium.

He tells of Lycidas the good,
And the sweet lady in the wood,
And teaches wisdom, high and holy,
In mirth and heavenly melancholy.

And oftentimes, with courage high,
He raises freedom's rallying cry ;
And, ancient leader of the van,
Asserts the dignity of man—

Asserts the rights with trumpet tongue,
That Justice from Oppression wrung,
And poet, patriot, statesman, sage,
Guides by his own a future age.

With such companions at my side
I float on London's human tide;
An atom on its billows thrown,
But lonely never, nor alone.

THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

LATE or early home returning,
In the starlight or the rain,
I beheld that lonely candle
Shining from his window-pane.
Ever o'er his tattered curtain,
Nightly looking, I could scan,
Aye inditing,
Writing—writing,
The pale figure of a man ;
Still discern behind him fall
The same shadow on the wall.

Far beyond the murky midnight,
By dim burning of my oil,
Filling aye his rapid leaflets,
I have watched him at his toil ;

Watched his broad and seamy forehead,
Watched his white industrious hand,
Ever passing
And repassing ;
Watched and strove to understand
What impelled it—gold, or fame—
Bread, or bubble of a name.

Oft I've asked, debating vainly
In the silence of my mind,
What the services he rendered
To his country or his kind ;
Whether tones of ancient music,
Or the sound of modern gong,
Wisdom holy,
Humours lowly,
Sermon, essay, novel, song,
Or philosophy sublime,
Filled the measure of his time.

Of the mighty world of London
He was portion unto me,
Portion of my life's experience,
Fused into my memory.
Twilight saw him at his folios,
Morning saw his fingers run,
Labouring ever,
Wearying never,
Of the task he had begun ;

Placid and content he seemed,
Like a man that toiled and dreamed.

No one sought him, no one knew him,
Undistinguished was his name ;
Never had his praise been uttered
By the oracles of fame.
Scanty fare and decent raiment,
Humble lodging, and a fire—
These he sought for,
These he wrought for,
And he gained his meek desire ;
Teaching men by written word—
Clinging to a hope deferred.

So he lived. At last I missed him ;
Still might evening twilight fall,
But no taper lit his lattice—
Lay no shadow on his wall.
In the winter of his seasons,
In the midnight of his day,
'Mid his writing,
And inditing,
Death had beckoned him away,
Ere the sentence he had planned
Found completion at his hand.

But this man so old and nameless
Left behind him projects large,

Schemes of progress undeveloped,
Worthy of a nation's charge ;
Noble fancies uncompleted,
Germs of beauty immatured,
Only needing
Kindly feeding
To have flourished and endured ;
Meet reward in golden store
To have lived for evermore.

Who shall tell what schemes majestic
Perish in the active brain ?
What humanity is robbed of,
Ne'er to be restored again ?
What we lose, because we honour
Overmuch the mighty dead,
And dispirit
Living merit,
Heaping scorn upon its head ?
Or perchance, when kinder grown,
Leaving it to die—alone ?

MARY AND LADY MARY;
OR,
NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOURS.

THE Lady Mary's placid eyes
Beam with no hopes, no memories ;
Beneath their lids no tear-drops flow
For Love or Pity, Joy or Woe.
She never knows, too barren she,
The fruitfulness of sympathy ;
She never weeps for others' pain,
Or smiles, except in her disdain.

Her face is pallid as the pearl,
Her hair is sleek, without a curl ;
With finger-tip she condescends
To touch the fingers of her friends,
As if she feared their palms might brand
Some moral stigma on her hand ;
Her pulse is calm, milk-white her skin,
She hath not blood enough to sin.

A very pattern, sage and staid,
Of all her sex—a model maid ;
Clear star—bright paragon of men—
She breaks no law of all the ten ;
Pure to the sight as snow-peak'd hill—
As inaccessible and chill ;—
In sunshine—but repelling heat—
And freezing in her own conceit.

If ever known to breathe a sigh,
It was for lack of flattery.
Though cold, insensible, and dull,
Admirers call her beautiful ;
She sucks their incense, breathes it, doats
On her own praise, that gently floats
On Fashion's wave—and lies in wait
To catch admirers of her state.

In published charities her name
Stands foremost, for she buys her fame ;
At church men see her thrice a-week,
In spirit proud, in aspect meek ;
Wearing Devotion like a mask
So marble cold, that sinners ask,
Beholding her at Mercy's throne,
“ Is this a woman or a stone ? ”

But different, far, the little maid,
That dwells unnoticed in the shade

Of Lady Mary's pomp and power;
A Mary, too, a simple flower,
With face all health, with cheeks all smile,
Undarkened by one cloud of guile;
And ruddy lips that seem to say,
"Come, kiss me, children, while ye may."

A cordial hand, a chubby arm,
And hazel eyes, large, soft, and warm;
Dark hair in curls, a snow-like bust,
A look all innocence, all trust,
Lit up at times by sunny mirth,
Like summer smiling on the earth;
A ringing laugh, whose every note
Bursts in clear music from her throat.

A painter's daughter—poor, perchance,
But rich in native elegance;
God bless the maid—she may not be
Without *some* touch of vanity.
She twines red rose-buds in her hair,
And smiles to know herself so fair;
And quite believes, like other belles,
The pleasant tale her mirror tells.

A very woman, full of tears,
Hopes, blushes, tenderesses, fears,
Griefs, laughter, kindness, joys and sighs,
Loves, likings, friendships, sympathies;

A heart to feel for every woe,
And pity, if not dole, bestow ;
A hand to give from scanty store,
A look to wish the offering more.

In artless faith and virtue strong,
Too loving to do Love a wrong ;
She takes delight in simple things,
And in the sunshine works and sings.
Sweet bird ! so meekly innocent,
The foulest hawk that ever rent
A trusting heart, would gaze, and fly,
And spare her in her purity.

Take Lady Mary ye who will,
Her woods, her castle on the hill,
Her lands o'er half a county spread—
And wither in her loveless bed ;
But give me Mary, frank and free,
Her beauty, grace, and modesty :
I pass My Lady in the mart—
I take the Woman with the heart.

FOLLOW YOUR LEADER.

THE STORY OF A LIFE.

“Follow your leader!” So said HOPE,
In the joyous days when I was young.
O’er meadow path, up mountain slope,
Through fragrant woods, I followed and sung;
And aye in the sunny air she smiled,
Bright as the cherub in Paphos born,
And aye my soul with a glanee she wiled,
And tinged all earth with the hues of morn.
Long she led me o’er hill and hollow,
Through rivers wide, o’er mountains dun,
Till she soared at last too high to follow,
And singed her pinions in the sun.

“Follow your leader!” So said LOVE,
Or a fairy sporting in his guise.
I followed to lift the challenging glove
Of many a maid with tell-tale eyes.
I followed, and dreamed of young delights,
Of passionate kisses, joyous pains,
Of honied words in sleepless nights,
And amorous tear-drops thick as rains.

But, ah ! full soon the frenzy slackened ;
There came a darkness and dimmed the ray,
The passion cooled, the sunshine blackened,
I lost the glory of my day.

"Follow your leader !" So said FAME
In the calmer hours of my fruitful noon.
O'er briery paths, through frost, through flame,
By torrent, and swamp, and wild lagoon,
Ever she led me, and ever I went,
With bleeding feet and sun-brown skin,
Eager ever and discontent,
As long as life had a prize to win.
But Dead-Sea apples alone she gave me
To recompense me for my pain,
And still, though her luring hand she wave me,
I may not follow her steps again.

"Follow your leader !" So said GOLD,
Ere the brown of my locks gave place to grey.
I could not follow—her looks were cold ;
Icy and brittle was the way.
And GOLD spread forth her wiles in vain,
So taking POWER to aid her spell,
"Follow your leaders !" exclaimed the twain,
"For where we go shall pleasure dwell."
I followed, and followed, till age came creeping,
And silvered the hair on my aching head,
And I lamented in vigils weeping
A youth misspent, and a prime misled.

"*Follow your leader!*" I hear a voice
Whispering to my soul this hour;—
"Who follows my light shall for ever rejoice,
Nor crave the perishing arm of *Power*;
Who follows my steps shall for ever hold
A blessing purer than earthly *Love*,
Brighter than *Fame*, richer than *Gold*—
So follow my light and look above."
'Tis late to turn, but refuse I may not,
My trustful eyes are heavenwards cast,
And ever the sweet voice says, "*Delay not,*
I'm thy first leader and thy last."

'Tis the friend of my youth come back again,
Sobered and chastened—but lovelier far
Than when in those days of sun and rain
She shone in my path as a guiding star.
She led me then, a wayward boy,
To things of Earth, and never of Heaven,
But now she whispers diviner joy,
Of errors blotted, of sins forgiven.
To a purpling sky she points her finger,
As westward wearily I plod,
And while I follow her steps, I linger
Calm as herself, in the faith of God.

ABOVE AND BELOW.

MIGHTY river, oh, mighty river,
Rolling in ebb and flow for ever,
Through the city so vast and old ;
Through massive bridges—by domes and spires,
Crowned with the smoke of a myriad fires ;—
City of majesty, power, and gold ;—
Thou lovest to float on thy waters dull
The white-winged fleets so beautiful,
And the lordly steamers speeding along,
Wind-defying, and swift and strong ;
Thou bearest them all on thy motherly breast,
Laden with riches, at Trade's behest—
Bounteous Trade, whose wine and corn
Stock the garner and fill the horn,
Who gives us Luxury, Joy, and Pleasure,
Stintless, sumless, out of measure—
Thou art a rich and a mighty river,
Rolling in ebb and flow for ever.

Doleful river, oh, doleful river,
 Pale on thy breast the moonbeams quiver,
 Through the city so drear and cold—
 City of sorrows hard to bear,
 Of guilt, injustice, and despair—
 City of miseries untold ;—
 Thou hidest below, in thy treacherous waters,
 The death-cold forms of Beauty's daughters;
 The corpses pale of the young and sad—
 Of the old whom sorrow has goaded mad—
 Mothers of babes that cannot know
 The sires that left them to their woe—
 Women forlorn, and men that run
 The race of passion, and die undone ;
 Thou takest them all in thy careless wave,
 Thou givest them all a ready grave ;
 Thou art a black and a doleful river,
 Rolling in ebb and flow for ever.

In ebb and flow for ever and ever—
 So rolls the world, thou murky river,
 So rolls the tide, above and below :
 Above, the rower impels his boat ;
 Below, with the current the dead men float ;—
 The waves may smile in the sunny glow,
 While above, in the glitter, and pomp, and glare,
 The flags of the vessels flap the air ;
 But below, in the silent under-tide,
 The waters vomit the wretch that died :

Above, the sound of the music swells,
From the passing ship, from the city bells ;
From below there cometh a gurgling breath,
As the desperate diver yields to death :
Above and below the waters go,
Bearing their burden of Joy or Woe ;
Rolling along, thou mighty river,
In ebb and flow for ever and ever.

JOHN LITTLEJOHN.

JOHN LITTLEJOHN was staunch and strong,
Upright and downright, scorning wrong ;
He gave good weight, and paid his way,
He thought for himself, and he said his say.
Whenever a rascal strove to pass,
Instead of silver, money of brass,
He took his hammer, and said, with a frown,
“ *The coin is spurious, nail it down.* ”

John Littlejohn was firm and true,
You could not cheat him in “ two and two ; ”
When foolish arguers, might and main,
Darkened and twisted the clear and plain,
He saw through the mazes of their speech
The simple truth beyond their reach ;
And crushing their logic, said, with a frown,
“ *Your coin is spurious, nail it down.* ”

John Littlejohn maintained the right,
Through storm and shine, in the world's despite ;
When fools or quacks desired his vote,
Dosed him with arguments, learned by rote,

Or by coaxing, threats, or promise, tried
To gain his support to the wrongful side,
“*Nay, nay,*” said John, with an angry frown,
“*Your coin is spurious, nail it down.*”

When told that kings had a right divine,
And that the people were herds of swine,
That nobles alone were fit to rule,
That the poor were unimproved by school,
That ceaseless toil was the proper fate
Of all but the wealthy and the great,
John shook his head, and swore, with a frown,
“*The coin is spurious, nail it down.*”

When told that events might justify
A false and crooked policy,
That a decent hope of future good
Might excuse departure from rectitude,
That a lie if white was a small offence
To be forgiven by men of sense,
“*Nay, nay,*” said John, with a sigh and frown,
“*The coin is spurious, nail it down.*”

When told from the pulpit or the press
That heaven was a place of exclusiveness,
That none but those could enter there
Who knelt with the “orthodox” at prayer,

And held all virtues out of their pale
As idle works of no avail,
John's face grew dark, as he swore, with a frown,
“ *The coin is spurious, nail it down.*”

Whenever the world our eyes would blind
With false pretences of such a kind,
With humbug, cant, and bigotry,
Or a specious, sham philosophy,
With wrong dressed up in the guise of right,
And darkness passing itself for light,
Let us imitate John, and exclaim, with a frown,
“ *The coins are spurious, nail them down.*”

THE POOR MAN'S BIRD.

A YEAR ago I had a child,
A little daughter fair and mild ;
More precious than my life to me,
She sleeps beneath the churchyard tree.
Oh ! she was good as she was fair,
Her presence was like balmy air ;
She was a radiance in my room,
She was sunlight in my gloom.

She loved thee well, thou little bird,
Her voice and thine were ever heard ;
They roused me when the morning shone,
But now I hear thy voice alone.
She called me gently to her side,
Gave me her bird, and, smiling, died.
Thou wert her last bequest to me ;
I loved her fondly—I love thee.

'Tis true, I often think it hard,
Sweet lark, to keep thee here imbarred,
Whilst thou art singing all day long,
As if the fields inspired thy song,
As if the flow'rs, the woods, the streams,
Were present in thy waking dreams ;
But yet, how can I let thee fly ?
What couldst thou do with liberty ?

What could'st *thou* do ?—Alas, for me !
What should *I* do if wanting thee,
Sole relic of my Lucy dear ?
There needs no talk—thou 'rt prisoner here.
But I will make thy durance sweet,
I'll bring thee turf to cool thy feet ;
Fresh turf, with daisies tipped in pink,
And water from the well to drink.

I need thee. Were it not to choose,
Ere sunshine dry the morning dews,
Thy fresh green turf, I should not stray
Out to the fields the live-long day—
I should be captive to the town,
And waste my life in alleys brown ;
Thy wants impel me to the sward,
And Nature's face is my reward.

Sweet bird, thou 'wakenest by thy song
Bright memories and affections strong ;
At sight of thee I dream of flowers,
And running streams, and branching bowers ;
But most of her whose little face
Was luminous with love and grace ;
Thou art a link I may not break—
I love thee for my Lucy's sake.

UNKNOWN ROMANCES.

I.

OFT have I wandered when the first faint light
Of morning shone upon the steeple vanes
Of sleeping London, through the silent night,
Musing on memories of joys and pains ;—
And looking down long vistas of dim lanes
And shadowy streets, one after other spread
In endless coil, have thought what hopes now dead
Once bloomed in every house, what tearful rains
Women have wept for husband, sire, or son,
What love and sorrow ran their course in each,
And what great silent tragedies were done ;—
And wished the dumb and secret walls had speech,
That they might whisper to me, one by one,
The sad true lessons that their walls might teach.

II.

Close and forgetful witnesses, they hide,
In nuptial chamber, attic, or saloon,
Many a legend sad of desolate bride
And mournful mother, blighted all too soon ;

Of strong men's agony, despair, and pride,
And mental glory darkened ere its noon.
But let the legends perish in their place,
For well I know where'er these walls have seen
Humanity's upturned and heavenly face,
That there has virtue, there has courage been—
That ev'n 'mid passions foul, and vices base,
Some ray of goodness interposed between.
Ye voiceless houses, ever as I gaze
This moral flashes from your walls serene.

THE FLOATING STRAW.

A THOUGHT IN THE PANIC, 1847.

THE wild waves are my nightly pillows,
Beneath me roll th' Atlantic billows ;
And as I rest on my couch of brine
I watch the eternal planets shine.
Ever I ride
On a harmless tide,
Fearing naught—enjoying all things—
Undisturbed by great or small things.

Alas ! for the lordly vessel
That sails so gallantly.
The winds may dash it,
The storms may wash it,
The lightnings rend its tall masts three ;
But neither the wind, nor the rain, nor the sea
Can injure me—can injure me.
The lightnings cannot strike me down,
Whirlwinds wreck, or whirlpools drown ;
And the ship to be lost ere the break of morn,
May pass o'er my head in saucy scorn ;

And when the night unveils its face,
I may float, unharmed, in my usual place,
And the ship may show to the pitying stars
No remnant but her broken spars.

Among the shells
In the ocean dells
The ships, the crews, and the captains lie,
But the floating straw looks up to the sky.
And the humble and contented man,
Unknown to fortune, escapes her ban,
And rides secure when breakers leap,
And mighty ships go down to the deep.

May pleasant breezes waft them home
That plough with their keels the driving foam.
Heaven be their hope, and Truth their law ;—
There needs no prayer for the floating straw.

A QUESTION ANSWERED.

WHAT to do to make thy fame
Live beyond thee in the tomb?
And thine honourable name
Shine, a star, through History's gloom?

Seize the Spirit of thy Time,
Take the measure of his height,
Look into his eyes sublime,
And imbue thee with their light.

Know his words e'er they are spoken,
And with utterance loud and clear,
Firm, persuasive, and unbroken,
Breathe them in the people's ear.

Think whate'er the Spirit thinks,
Feel, thyself, whate'er he feels,
Drink at fountains where he drinks,
And reveal what he reveals.

And whate'er thy medium be,
 Canvas, stone, or printed sheet,
Fiction, or philosophy,
 Or a ballad for the street ;

Or, perchance, with passion fraught,
 Spoken words, like lightnings thrown,
Tell the people all thy thought,
 And the world shall be thine own.

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

WHAT might be done if men were wise—
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother,
Would they unite,
In love and right,
And cease their scorn of one another?

Oppression's heart might be imbued
With kindling drops of loving-kindness,
And knowledge pour,
From shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.

All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrongs,
All vice and crime might die together;
And wine and corn,
To each man born,
Be free as warmth in summer weather.

The meanest wretch that ever trod,
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,
Might stand erect,
In self-respect,
And share the teeming world to-morrow.

What might be done ? *This* might be done,
And more than *this*, my suffering brother—
More than the tongue
Ever said or sung,
If men were wise and loved each other.

THE GOLDEN MADNESS.

By the road-side there sat an aged man,
Who all day long from dawn into the night
Counted with weary fingers heaps of stones.
His red eyes dropped with rheum, his yellow hands
Trembled with palsy, his pale sunken cheeks
Were marked with deep and venerable seams,
His flat bald brow was ever bent to earth,
His few grey hairs waved to the passing winds,
His straggling teeth, blackened and carious,
Rattled and tumbled from his bloodless gums.
I spoke him kindly, saying, "Why this toil
At task like this, cracking thy rotten bones,
To gain nor health, nor recompense, nor thanks?"
He made no answer, but went counting on,
Mumbling and muttering slowly to himself,
Chinking the stones with melancholy sound,
Piece after piece; looking nor right, nor left,
Nor upwards, but aye down upon the heap.
I asked again, "What is it that thou dost,

Wasting the remnant of thy days in toil,
Without fruition to thyself or kind,
As earnestly as if these stones were gold,
And all thine own to spend and to enjoy?"

He looked upon me with a vacant eye,
And stopped not in his task. "Gold! didst thou say?
They *are* gold—precious, ready coined, and pure,
And all mine own to spend and to enjoy,
When I have counted them. So, get thee gone,
Unless thou art a borrower or a thief,
When I shall summon aid to make thee go,
And scourge thee for thy pains." And aye he clinked
The flints, and pebbles, and small chips of slate,
One after one, muttering their numbers o'er,
At every hundred stopping for awhile
To rub his withered palms, and eye the heap
With idiot happiness, ere he resumed.

There came a stranger by the way. I asked
If he knew aught of this forlorn old man.
"Right well," he said; "the creature is insane,
And hath been ever since he had a beard.
He first went mad for greediness of gold."
"Know ye his story?" "Perfectly," said he.
"Look how he counts his miserable flints
And bits of slate. Twelve mortal hours each day
He sits at work, summer and winter both.
'Mid storm or sunshine, heat or nipping frost,
He counts and counts; and since his limbs were young,

Till now that he is crooked and stiffened old,
He hath not missed a day. The silly wretch
Believes each stone a lump of shining gold,
And that he made a bargain with the fiend,
That if he 'd count one thousand million coins
Of minted gold, audibly, one by one,
The gold should be his own the very hour
When he had told the thousand millionth piece;
Provided always, as such bargains go,
The fiend should have his soul in recompense.

“Unskilled in figures, but brimful of greed,
He chuckled at his bargain, and began;
And for a year reckoned with hopeful heart.
At last a glimpse of light broke on his sense,
And showed the fool that millions—quickly said—
Were not so quickly counted as he thought.
But still he plies his melancholy task,
Dreaming of boundless wealth and curbless power,
And slavish worship from his fellow-men.

“If he could reckon fifty thousand stones
Daily, and miss no day in all the year,
'T would take him five-and-fifty years of life
To reach the awful millions he desires.
He has been fifty of these years or more
Feeding his coward soul with this conceit.
Exposed to every blast, starved, wretched, old,
Toothless, and clothed with rags and squalidness,
He eyes his fancied treasure with delight,
And thinks to cheat the devil at the last.

Look at his drivelling lips, his bloodshot eyes,
His trembling hands, his loose and yellow skin,
His flimsy rottenness, and own with me
That this man's madness, though a piteous thing,
Deserves no pity, for the avarice
So mean and filthy that was cause of it."

* * * * *

I gazed once more upon his wrinkled face,
Vacant with idiotcy, and went my way
Filled with disgust and sorrow, for I deemed
That his great lunacy was but a type
Of many a smaller madness as abject,
That daily takes possession of men's hearts
And blinds them to the uses of their life.
Poor fool! he gathers stones—they gather gold
With toil and moil, thick sweat and grovelling
thought.

He has his flints, and they acquire their coin.
And who's the wiser? Neither he nor they.

THE MOWERS.

AN ANTICIPATION OF THE CHOLERA, 1848.

DENSE on the stream the vapours lay,
Thick as wool on the cold highway ;
Spongy and dim each lonely lamp
Shone o'er the streets so dull and damp ;
The moonbeam could not pierce the cloud
That swathed the city like a shroud.
There stood three Shapes on the bridge alone,
Three figures by the coping stone ;
Gaunt, and tall, and undefined,
Spectres built of mist and wind ;
Changing ever in form and height,
But black and palpable to sight.

“ This is a city fair to see,”
Whispered one of the fearful three ;
“ A mighty tribute it pays to me.
Into its river, winding slow,
Thick and foul from shore to shore,
The vessels come, the vessels go,
And teeming lands their riches pour.
It spreads beneath the murky sky
A wilderness of masonry ;

Huge, unshapely, overgrown,
Dingy brick and blackened stone.
Mammon is its chief and lord,
Monarch slavishly adored ;
Mammon sitting side by side
With Pomp, and Luxury, and Pride ;
Who call his large dominions theirs,
Nor dream a portion is Despair's.

“ Countless thousands bend to me
In rags and purple, in hovel and hall,
And pay the tax of misery
With tears, and blood, and spoken gall.
Whenever they cry
For aid to die,
I give them courage to dare the worst,
And leave their ban on a world accurst.
I show them the river so black and deep,
They take the plunge, they sink to sleep ;
I show them poison, I show them rope,
They rush to death without a hope.
Poison, and rope, and pistol ball,
Welcome either, welcome all !
I am the lord of the teeming town—
I mow them down, I mow them down !”

“ Aye thou art great, but greater I,”
The second spectre made reply ;

“Thou rulest with a frown austere,
Thy name is synonym of Fear.
But I, despotic and hard as thou,
Have a laughing lip, an open brow.
I build a temple in every lane,

I have a palace in every street ;
And the victims throng to the doors amain,
And wallow like swine beneath my feet.
To me the strong man gives his health,
The wise man reason, the rich man wealth,
Maids their virtue, youth its charms,
And mothers the children in their arms.
Thou art a slayer of mortal men—
Thou of the unit, I of the ten ;
Great thou art, but greater I,
To decimate humanity.
'Tis *I* am the lord of the teeming town—
I mow them down, I mow them down !”

“Vain boasters to exult at death,”
The third replied, “so feebly done ;
I ope my jaws, and with a breath
Slay thousands while you think of one.
All the blood that Cæsar spilled,
All that Alexander drew,
All the hosts by ‘glory’ killed,
From Agincourt to Waterloo,
Compared with those whom I have slain,
Are but a river to the main.

“ I brew disease in stagnant pools,
And wandering here, disporting there,
Favoured much by knaves and fools,
I poison streams, I taint the air ;
I shake from my locks the spreading pest,
I keep the typhus at my behest ;
In filth and slime
I crawl, I climb.
I find the workman at his trade,
I blow on his lips, and down he lies ;
I look in the face of the ruddiest maid,
And straight the fire forsakes her eyes—
She droops, she sickens, and she dies ;
I stint the growth of babes new born,
Or shear them off like standing corn ;
I rob the sunshine of its glow,
I poison all the winds that blow ;
Whenever they pass they suck my breath,
And freight their wings with certain death.
’Tis *I* am the lord of the crowded town—
I mow them down, I mow them down !

“ But great as we are, there cometh one
Greater than you—greater than I,
To aid the deeds that shall be done,
To end the work that we’ve begun.
And thin this thick humanity.
I see his footmarks east and west,
I hear his tread in the silence fall,

He shall not sleep, he shall not rest—

He comes to aid us one and all.

Were men as wise as men might be,

They would not work for you, for me,

For him that cometh over the sea ;

But they will not heed the warning voice.

The Cholera comes, rejoice ! rejoice !

He shall be lord of the swarming town,

And mow them down, and mow them down ! ”

SAID I TO MYSELF, SAID I.

I'm poor and quite unknown,
I have neither fame nor rank;
My labour is all I own,
I have no gold at the bank;
I'm one of the common crowd,
Despised of the passers-by,
Contemned by the rich and proud—
Said I to myself, said I.

I want, and I cannot obtain,
The luxuries of the earth;
My raiment is scant and plain,
And I live in the fear of dearth;
While others can laugh or sing,
I have ever some cause to sigh;
I'm a weary wanderling—
Said I to myself, said I.

But is this grieving just ?
Is it wise to fret and wail ?
Is it right, thou speck of dust,
Thine envy should prevail ?
Is it fitting thou should'st close
Thy sight to the sunny sky,
And an utter dark suppose ?
Said I to myself, said I.

If poor, thou hast thy health ;
If humble, thou art strong ;
And the lark, that knows not wealth,
Ever sings a happy song.
The flow'rs rejoice in the air,
And give thy needs the lie ;—
Thou 'rt a fool to foster care,
Said I to myself, said I.

If the wants of thy pride be great,
The needs of thy health are small,
And the world is the man's estate
Who can wisely enjoy it all.
For him is the landscape spread,
For him do the breezes ply,
For him is the day-beam shed—
Said I to myself, said I.

For him are the oceans rolled,
For him do the rivers run,
For him doth the year unfold
Her bounties to the sun ;
For him, if his heart be pure,
Shall common things supply
All pleasures that endure—
Said I to myself, said I.

For him each blade of grass
Waves pleasure as it grows ;
For him, as the light clouds pass,
A spirit of beauty flows ;
For him, as the streamlets leap,
Or the winds on the tree-tops sigh,
Comes a music sweet and deep—
Said I to myself, said I.

Nor of earth are his joys alone,
How mean soever his state—
On him from the starry zone
His ministering angels wait ;
With him in voiceless thought
They hold communion high ;
By them are his fancies fraught—
Said I to myself, said I.

I will mould my life afresh,
I will circumscribe desire ;
Farewell to ye, griefs of flesh !
And let my soul aspire.
I will make my wishes few,
That my joys may multiply ;
Adieu, false wants, adieu !—
Said I to myself, said I.

AN APPEAL TO PARIS.—1848.

BEAUTIFUL Paris ! morning star of nations !
The Lucifer of cities ! Lifting high
The beacon blaze of young democracy !
Medina and Gomorrha both in one—
Medina of a high and holy creed,
To be developed in a coming time ;
Gomorrha, rampant with all vice and guilt :—
Luxurious, godless, grovelling, soaring Paris,
Laden with intellect, and yet not wise :—
Metropolis of satire and lampoon,
Of wit, of elegance, of mirth, of song,
And fearful tragedies done day by day,
Which put our hair on end in the open streets :—
The busy hive of awful memories,
The potent arbiter of popular will,
The great electric centre whence the shocks
Of pulsing freedom vibrate through the world :—
Beautiful Paris ! sacred to our hearts,
With all thy folly, all thy wickedness,
If but for Bailly, Vergniaud, Gensonné,
And noblest Roland, she of Roman soul,

And the great patriots and friends of man,
Who went to death for holy liberty.
Lift up thy voice, oh, Paris ! once again,
And speak the thought that labours in thy breast.
Shake off thy gauds and tinsels—be thyself;
Cease thy lewd jests, and heartless revelries,
And adorations of all worthless things—
Thy scorn, thy sarcasm, and thy unbelief,
And in the conflict and the march of men
Do justice to thy nature, and complete
The glorious work, so gloriously begun
By the great souls of pregnant eighty-nine.
Come forth, oh, Paris ! freed from vice and stain,
Like a young warrior, dallying too long
With loving women, wasting precious hours
In base delights and enervating sloth,
Who, when he shakes them off, puts back his hair
From his broad brow, and places on his head
The plumed helmet—throws his velvets off,
And swathes his vigorous limbs in glancing steel,
To lead true hearts to struggle for mankind.
Or if no more, soldier of liberty,
Thou 'lt lead the nations—stand upon the hill,
And, like a prophet, preach a holy creed
Of freedom, progress, peace, and happiness;
And all the world shall listen to thy voice,
And Tyranny, hyena big with young,
Dreading the sound, shall farrow in affright,
And drop, still-born, her sanguinary cubs,

And many a bloody feud be spared mankind.
Poland again, with desperate grasp, shall seize
The neck of her enslaver, and extort
Full justice from his terror. Hungary,
Ermined and crowned, shall sit in her own seat
In peaceful state and sober majesty.
And Italy, unloosening her bonds
By her strong will, shall be at last the home
Of broadly based and virtuous liberty;
And in her bosom nurture evermore,
Not the fierce virtues of her Roman youth,
But the calm blessings of her later time—
Science and art, and civilizing trade,
Divine philosophy, diviner song,
And true religion reconciled with man.
Speak out, oh, Paris! purify thyself
By noble thoughts, and deeds will follow them.
The world has need of thee. Humanity
Droops for thy dalliance with degraded things,
Alien, and most unworthy of the soul
That sleeps within thee. Rouse thyself, oh, Paris!
The time expects thee. Pyrenees, and Alps,
And Appenines, and snow-clad Balkans, wait,
With all their echoes, to repeat the words
Which thou *must* utter! Thou hast slumbered long—
Long dallied. Speak! The world will answer thee!

THOUGHTS.

TRUE thoughts, your days of grief are done,
No more shall scorn or hate impede you—
Born in the light, where'er the sun
Shines on mankind, mankind shall heed you.

So grow, ye grains of mustard seed,
Grow each into a tree,
And kindle, sparks, to beal-fires bright,
That all the earth may see.
And spread, ye thoughts of Truth and Right,
O'er all humanity.

Time *was* when thoughts bore tears and death
To the wise few that dared to raise them;
Time *is* when thoughts are living breath,
And the world's throbbing heart obeys them.

So grow, ye grains of mustard seed,
Grow each into a tree,
And kindle, sparks, to beal-fires bright,
That all the earth may see.
And spread, ye workers for the Right,
Onwards eternally.

THE PHILOSOPHIST.

A PORTRAIT.

HE turns to heaven his small grey eyes,
He opes his lips in pompous wise,
And lets his measured accents fall
With a rough burr and northern drawl,
As he expounds his theories.

He talks of Nature and her laws,
Of man, the mind, the great First Cause,
Demand, supply, life, death, increase,
The over-fruitfulness of peace,
And prates upon them, clause by clause.

War, like a thunder-storm, quoth he,
Is moral electricity;
It thins the heavy air, makes clear
The dense and dangerous atmosphere
O'erladen with humanity.

'T is cruel shame, mistake most dire,
That men should mate in young desire,
And trust alone to honest toil,
The kindly heaven, the genial soil,
For food, and shelter, and attire.

He thinks it time the truth were said—
That mouths, too many to be fed,
Swarm on the superpopulous land,
And that small wit may understand
That stupid peasants should not wed.

He thinks it decent, for the sake
Of lords with large domains at stake,
That "common people" should not breed
More plenteously than they can feed,
And that steam husbandmen would "take."

If each poor couple, boors and clowns,
Or dirty artizans of towns,
Would, when they wed, produce but two
To take their place in season due,
Philosophy might spare its frowns ;

But this not chancing, he declares
The rich alone should live in pairs,
And for their sake each other man
Consume as little as he can,
And die unmated in his cares.

He thinks, while sympathy is sure,
That mendicancy is the cure
For pauperism ; that 't is not right
To mulct the rich in their despite,
But that the poor should feed the poor.

This said, he clasps his fingers ten,
And sniffs th' applause of voice and pen ;
Bows placidly, goes home to dine,
And wastes the food, in pomp and wine,
Of half a hundred better men.

MOUNTAIN STREAMS.

AN ASPIRATION FROM TOWN.

WHAT time the fern puts forth its rings,
What time the early throstle sings,
I love to fly the murky town,
And tread the moorlands, bare and brown;
From greenest level of the glens
To barest summit of the Bens,
To trace the torrents where they flow,
Serene or brawling, fierce or slow;
To linger pleased, and loiter long,
A silent listener to their song.

Farewell, ye streets! Again I'll sit
On crags to watch the shadows flit;
To list the buzzing of the bee,
Or branches waving like a sea;
To hear far off the cuckoo's note,
Or lark's clear carol high afloat,

And find a joy in every sound,
Of air, the water, or the ground;
Of fancies full, though fixing nought,
And thinking—heedless of my thought.

Farewell! and in the teeth of care
I'll breathe the buxom mountain air,
Feed vision upon dyes and hues
That from the hill-top interfuse,
White rocks, and lichens born of spray,
Dark heather tufts, and mosses grey,
Green grass, blue sky, and boulders brown,
With amber waters glistening down,
And early flowers, blue, white, and pink,
That fringe with beauty all the brink.

Farewell, ye streets! Beneath an arch
Of drooping birch or feathery larch,
Or mountain ash, that o'er it bends,
I'll watch some streamlet as it wends;
Some brook whose tune its course betrays,
Whose verdure dogs its hidden ways—
Verdure of trees and bloom of flowers,
And music fresher than the showers,
Soft-dripping where the tendrils twine;
And all its beauty shall be mine.

Aye, mine, to bring me joy and health,
And endless store of mental wealth—

Wealth ever given to hearts that warm
To loveliness of sound or form,
And that can see in Nature's face
A hope, a beauty, and a grace—
That in the city or the woods,
In thoroughfares or solitudes,
Can live their life at Nature's call,
Despising nothing, loving all.

Sweet streams, that over summits leap,
Or fair in rock-hewn basins sleep;
That foaming burst in bright cascades,
Or toy with cowslips in the shades;
That shout till earth and sky grow mute,
Or tinkle lowly as a lute;
That sing a song of lusty joy,
Or murmur like a love-lorn boy;
That creep or fall, that flow or run—
I doat upon you every one.

For many a day of calm delight,
And hour of pleasure stol'n from night;
For morning freshness, joy of noon,
And beauty rising with the moon;
For health, encrimsoner of cheeks,
And wisdom gained on mountain peaks;
For inward light from Nature won,
And visions gilded by the sun;
For fancies fair, and waking dreams—
I love ye all, ye mountain streams.

BARON BRAEMAR.

A "TILT" WITH A GREAT DUKE.

"I'm lord of the Corrie, I'm chief of the Ben,
I rule like a kaiser o'er mountain and glen;
The people may tramp over city and town,
But their feet shall not tread on my moorlands so brown.
Their presence would trouble the tremulous deer,
And grouse, and not men, shall be denizens here,
As long as my title holds good against bar,
And all for my pleasure," quoth Baron Braemar.

"I've drained off the peasants, I've banished them forth—
There is scarcely a Celt on the hills of the North;
And the few that remain by the shores of the sea,
May die or live on without hindrance from me.
And, thanks to the law, while my land is my own
I'll keep it for grouse, or the red-deer alone,
And roam o'er my mountains supreme as a czar,
And meet not a pauper," quoth Baron Braemar.

“The land may be lovely, most pleasant its paths,
Most lordly its mountains, most verdant its straths,
Most beauteous the torrents that scatter their spray,
Or dash down in foam o’er the rocks in the way;
What matters its beauty to Cockneys or snobs,
To Jones or to Jenkins, to Smith or to Hobbs?
The region is mine, both the near and the far;
They shall not behold it,” quoth Baron Braemar.

“What business have they in my glens or my woods,
To clamber my mountains, to roam by my floods,
To tread my wild heather, or wander at will
From the vale to the mist-covered cope of the hill?
Did *I* not inherit? am *I* not the lord?
Let them place but a foot upon moorland or sward,
And my dogs and my gillies shall ‘nose’ them afar,
And hunt them for pastime,” quoth Baron Braemar.

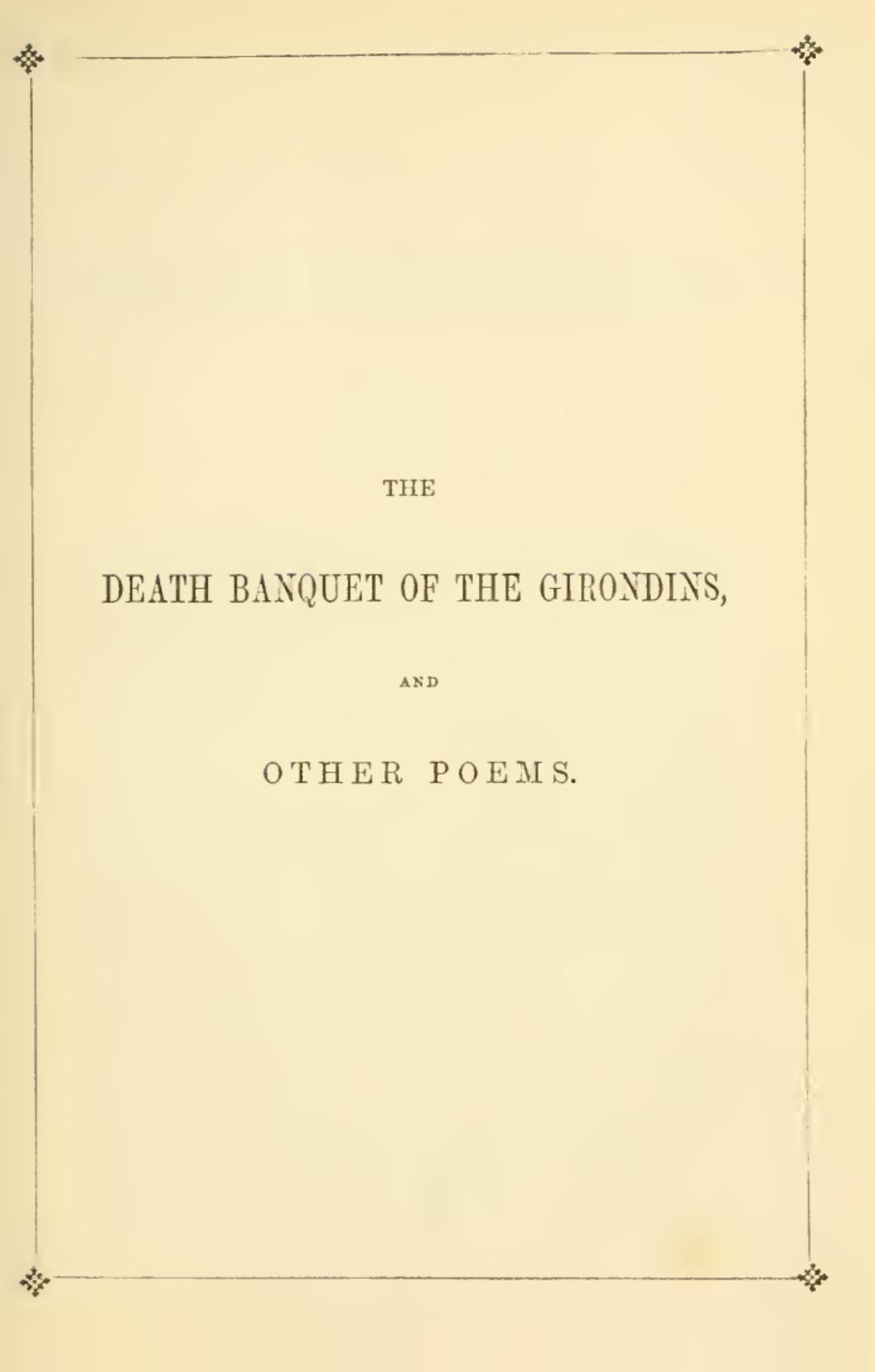
“’Tis true that a murmur resounds from the crowd,
A murmur fast spreading, indignant, and loud,
That starts ugly questions of ‘Justice’ and ‘Right,’
And doubts to be solved by the popular might;—
A murmur which hints that such questions should sleep
If those who still *hold* are desirous to *keep*;—
But let them rail on—’t is with *words* that they war:
My weapons are stronger,” quoth Baron Braemar.

O mighty Lord Baron, great dealer in deer,
Great owner of moorlands, a word in your ear:—

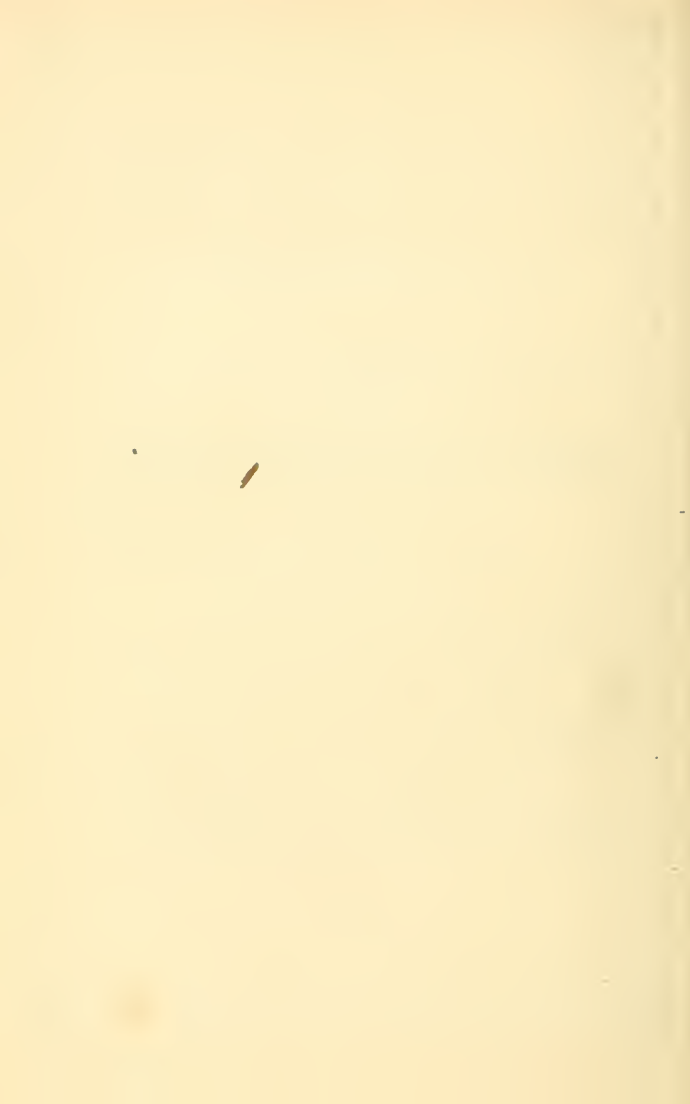
Would you like, in your fulness of insolent pride,
To farm out the sea, and take rents for the tide?
Would you like the Earth's fatness to grow but for you?
Would you shut us from sunshine, the air, and the dew?
Would you fence out the sky from us vulgar afar?—
You would if you could, my Lord Baron Braemar.

One word as a warning :—We think 't would be wise
If you 'd come from your deserts and open your eyes ;—
Free foot on the mountain, free path in the glen—
Not *all* for your cattle—leave something for men.
And if from the tourist you shrink with dismay,
Turn the wilds into corn-fields and keep him away :
Our isle is too narrow for Nimrods, by far ;
We cannot afford them, my Lord of Braemar.

Were Commerce extinct—were our Trade at a stand—
Were the mouths to be fed growing few in the land—
Were we back to the point of a century ago—
We might leave you your moors to go shooting upon.
But e'en in such case 't would be worse than insane
To refuse us a sight of the hills where you reign.
Is it safer just now ?—Look at things as they are,
And be wise while there's time, my Lord Baron Braemar.



THE
DEATH BANQUET OF THE GIRONDINS,
AND
OTHER POEMS.



THE DEATH BANQUET OF THE GIRONDINS.

A FRAGMENT.

[“The Girondins spent the last night of their captivity in the great dungeon—that Hall of Death. The tribunal had ordered that the still warm corpse of Valazé should be taken back to the prison, carried on the same cart with his accomplices to the place of execution, and buried with them. * * The gendarmes placed the body in a corner of the prison. The Girondins, one after the other, kissed the heroic hand of their friend. They covered his face with his mantle. ‘To-morrow!’ said they to the corpse; and they gathered their strength for the coming day. It was near midnight. The deputy Bailleul, proscribed like them but concealed in Paris, had promised to send them from without, on the day of their judgment, a last repast—of triumph or of death, according as they might be acquitted or condemned. By the help of a friend, he kept his word. The funeral supper was spread in the great dungeon. Costly viands, rare wines, flowers, and lights covered the oak table of the prison. * * The meal lasted till the dawn of day. Vergniaud, seated near the centre of the table, presided with the same calm dignity which he had preserved during the night of the 10th of August while presiding over the Convention. The guests ate and drank with sobriety—merely to recruit their strength. Their discourse was grave and solemn, though not sad. Many of them spoke of the immortality of the soul, and expressed their belief in a future state.”—LAMARTINE’S HISTORY OF THE GIRONDINS.

“The last night of the Girondins was sublime. Vergniaud was provided with poison. He threw it away that he might die with his

friends. They took a last meal together, at which they were by turns merry, serious, and eloquent. Brissot and Gensonné were grave and pensive. Vergniaud spoke of expiring liberty in the noblest terms of regret, and of the destination of man with persuasive eloquence. Ducos repeated verses which he had composed in prison; and they all joined in singing hymns to France and liberty."—THIERS'S HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.]

VERGNIAUD.

Never despair of Goodness. Men are bad,
But have been worse. The badness shall die out;
The goodness, like the thistle-down, shall float,
Bearing a germ beneath its tiny ear—
A germ predestined to become a tree,
To fall on fruitful soil, and on its boughs
Bear seed enough to stock the universe.
Never despair of Freedom. Though we die
In cruel martyrdom most undeserved,
What matters it—if Truth survive our bones?
No, my dear brothers, we shall not despair,
Now or hereafter, for ourselves or men;
For we are sorrow-proof; our souls have borne
All the worst ills that can afflict the just.
We can sit down, strengthened by virtuous will,
And dare all malice and all power of men
To add one mental pang to bodily death,
Or rob us of the smallest privilege
That appertains to our humanity.
They may manure their gardens with our flesh,

And decompose our scaffolding of bones,
But cannot harm us, cannot touch the *I*,
The *Thou*, that dwells in clay receptacle,
Vast, awful, inaccessible, alone,
And indestructible as earth or heaven.

BRISSOT.

Would we could summon our poor Valazé
To visit us, and his forsaken corpse,
Which bears us now such mournful company.
What secrets he could tell us if he might.
Perchance even now he listens to our words,
And shares our sorrow as he shared before.

SILLERY.

I do propose that in a solemn pledge
Over this wine we bear our love to him—
The soul of Valazé, if soul he have,
Outliving its poor garb of flesh and bone,
Or I, or thou, or any piece of dust
That walks on legs and calls itself a man ;
Here 's to his memory !—and, if he live,
May he be happy in the light of heaven.

BRISSOT.

Dear Valazé ! 'tis pleasant to my soul,
For soul *I* have, coeval with its God,

To think that he is with us at this hour ;
Filled with the virtuous joy that shall be ours,
Soon as the bloody knife has done its work
In opening the door 'twixt earth and heaven,
And letting us go free.

LASOURCE.

Free of the earth, perhaps, but free as gods ?
To love, to know, to labour, to aspire ?
They say that heaven is full beatitude,
Bliss infinite, and yet a bliss complete,
Sum of all hopes, and crown of all desire.
I would not pass into a stagnant heaven,
For ever singing psalms and saying prayers.
Ah, no ; the heaven that my spirit craves,
If place it be, and not a state of mind,
Is place for Progress—infinite as God.
There is no good but effort. Paradise,
With nothing to be done, would be to me
Worse than the blackest Hell that Dante drew,
Or English Milton in his awful song.

DUCOS.

What work would'st do ? Would'st like to strive
in heaven
With Robespierres or Dantons ? or would'st go
Down to the other place to battle there ?

LASOURCE.

As for the other place, there is no hell
But that which dwells in the ungodly soul—
A hell eternal as the soul itself.
But for the virtuous and aspiring mind
There is no task more adequate to heaven
Than war with Error. Light was only made
To change the alien Darkness to itself;
Love but to conquer and extinguish Hate.

CARRA.

I have two doubts; but to my tranquil mind
Each is a comfort. If perchance I go
Out of this body and remain myself,
I feel that God is good, and that this self
Shall not be damned, whatever bigots feign.
But shall enjoy the infinitude of love.
And if I go *not* hence—if I am *this*,—
This bag of joints, and arteries, and flesh—
Nothing besides—and consciousness expires
When the lungs cease their functions, and the heart
Sends to the pulse the living stream no more,
There is nor disappointment, grief, nor pain,
In thought of nothingness. I've lived my life,
And can go down to Death without a pang,
And think annihilation bliss indeed.

DUCOS.

I not. I take an interest in things,
And would be glad to learn the fate of France,
For whose dear sake we die to-morrow morn ;
And if the “incorruptible” corrupt
And bloody Robespierre shall ’scape the toils
He sets for us. I should be glad to know
How long the savage hounds that lap our blood
Shall offer up such holocausts to Hate,
As we shall be, ere shines another sun.
Nor that alone ;—I should rejoice to see
What great new poets shall arise with Time,
What famous plays and mighty play-actors
Shall draw the tears from lovely ladies’ eyes,
Or dimple their sweet cheeks to heavenly smiles ;
What new discoveries shall yet be made,
Greater than printing or than gunpowder ;
And what shall be the fashion of men’s beards
And young girls’ petticoats a century hence ;
How long the French Republic shall endure,
And whether any Cromwell shall arise
To turn our troubles to his own account ;
Or worst of all, whether the Capet race
Shall mount the throne again to play the fool,
And drive humanity a century back ;
And whether Catholic and Protestant
Shall hate each other in the days to come,
And do foul murder for the love of God,
As they have done since Luther was a priest.

FONFRÈDE.

And so should I ; but not alone to know.
To see the miseries of this poor world,
Without the power to aid in their relief,
Would be indeed as bad as pitchy hell,
And worms that die not, and tormenting fiends.
No, no, Ducos ; if we return at all,
We shall return refreshed, and play a part.

VERGNIAUD.

Keep to thy thought, Fonfrède, and lose it not ;
The soul, partaker of Divinity,
Must be partaker of Infinity—
Must know alike the secrets of all space,
And of this little grain of rolling sand
That we are born upon. Yes, we shall see,
Clear as a book, the riddle of the world ;
We shall repeat the watchword of the stars ;
We shall drink in divine enravishment,
As full upon us burst the harmonies
Of rolling planets, systems, firmaments.
The key-note of the music shall be plain,
And we shall strike it whensoever we will,
And add to infinite Joy, Love infinite.

FAUCHET.

If we are worthy. Not to every soul
Such love and joy as thou depicturest.
Freed from its earthly shell, th' eternal mind
Must struggle *there*, as it has struggled here,

Upward, still upward, with incessant toil,
To make itself partaker of the bliss,
That in a widening circle God hath spread
Through his ineffable eternity.

SILLERY.

Is talking, struggling? For I trust, dear friend,
There will be talking in the other world,
And that we, twenty-one, now supping here,
Discoursing mistily of earth and heaven,
Shall have a nobler banquet in the sky,
And better talk in better company,
To-morrow night;—banquet of heavenly fruits,
Ambrosia, nectar, manna, wine of gods,
And converse with the mighty men of yore:—
Socrates, Plato, Buddha, Mahomet,
Homer, Anacreon, Euripides,
Ovid and Dante, Shakspeare and Corneille,
With Cæsar, Antony, and Constantine,
With Cleopatra, Hero, Helena,
Eve, and Semiramis, and Joan of Arc,
And a whole host of the undying dead—
Sages, philosophers, and ancient kings,
Bards, statesmen, actors, dancing girls, and wits,
And most beloved, our brother Valazé,
Gone as a herald to announce the doom
Of three times seven unconquerable souls,
Coming to join them ere the world goes round,
Or the next twilight deepens into day.

LASOURCE.

What ails our friend, our brother Vergniaud ?
His gaze is fixed upon vacuity—
He hears us not—he looks, but sees us not.
Kind sleep has thrown her mantle over him,
And in his slumber flow unbidden tears.

FONFRÈDE.

I could weep with him. Here we sit and talk
Of heaven and hell, unloosing knotty points,
Or grappling with them, but to make the coil
A worse entanglement—forgetting France,
And those who love us. I've not shed a tear,
But I could weep a flood, and in each drop
Pay tribute to my own humanity,
Which blushes for me, that I should forget
In these last hours my few, my faithful friends ;
And she, the dear companion of my soul—
My love—my better life—that prays for me
In solitude and sorrow ; or, perchance,
Watches outside these very walls, and weeps.
The tears are gathering in my eyes for her,
And they *must* flow, or make my heart a wreck.

VERGNIAUD.

Let the flood burst : tears are the wine of grief,
And will inspire thee more than sparkling Ai
Can stir the pulses of a bacchanal.
I crave no pardon for the tears I've shed,

The latest luxury that I shall taste.
In one short minute I have lived a life,
Felt all my joys, and suffered all my woes ;
Loved all my loves, hoped all my hopes, despaired
All the despairs that ever dulled my sense ;
Spoken my speeches, stirred a listening land
In name of freedom and the rights of men,
Ending this cosmorama of my days
By weeping on the breast of her I love
The tears you saw me shed—the tears whose flow
Refreshed my heated brain, and bore me back
To consciousness of *now*, which I had lost.

GENSONNÉ.

Even so with me. I have been living lives
In minutes since our festival began.
Aye as the sands grows scanty in the glass
Of unrelenting time, the falling grain
Exceeds in value all that went before,
And years of feeling load the back of each.
Five minutes past I was a little child—
I roamed in meadows, gathering violets,
I bathed my tiny feet in running streams,
I strutted o'er the sward with martial drum,
I conned my painful lesson in the school,
I nestled in my little sister's breast,
And fell asleep, my arms entwining her.
And then I grew into a thoughtful boy,

Full of high projects and intense desires—
Passion and folly, wisdom and romance,
Ruling my soul by turns. Another grain
Dropped in the glass, and, lo ! I was a man
Filled with ambition, and desire of fame,
Raising my voice above the popular din,
To swell the rallying cry of ceaseless war
To royal tyranny and feudal wrong.
Another grain dropped through, and I was wed,
And lived long years of bridal happiness.
I built my house upon a hill. I planned
Gardens and orchards, parks, and sloping lawns,
And fled from clash of modern politics
To ancient lore and calm philosophy.
Another grain, and all the visions fled.
I braved false judges in the judgment seat,
Dishonouring judgment and the name of man ;
Defied them to their teeth, and dared to die,
And leave my fate a legacy to Time.
All this, and more, unwinding like a scroll,
Has passed before me at this feast of death,
Even as I talked, and drank, and laughed with you.
A double consciousness—an added self
Swathed me all o'er, as glory swathes a saint.

DUCOS.

Thy visions have been brave, dear Gensonné.
I have been thinking of my mistresses,

Eulalie, Marie, Gabrielle, Fîfine—
Who loved me first—who last—and who the best ;
And whether one of them to-morrow morn
Will give a last and solitary thought
To me, a man defrauded of my head,
Having no property in my own life,
And lost to them for loving liberty,
And daring to interpret for myself
What meant the name.

SILLERY

Did'st love the four at once ? or two by two ?
Or did'st thou take the darlings one by one ?
Or love this liberty still more than them ?
In either case why should they weep for thee,
So loose and fickle in thy preference ?
And yet 'tis sweet to know a woman sighs
For our distresses, and would share them all,
If sharing would relieve. Fill up again—
We grow lugubrious. *I*, that ever laughed,
Crutch-ridden, and decrepit as I am,
At nightly comedy, and daily farce,
Played in all places—forum, palace, street,
In church and tavern, attic or saloon—
Must not be tragic, ev'n though dungeon walls
Shut from my vision that stupendous farce—
The rolling earth. Fill to the brim your cups.
We'll toast our friends, our wives, our mistresses.

VERGNIAUD.

God bless the maid whose image fills my soul,
The incarnation of all purity—
All modesty—all loveliness—all grace,
My own heart's partner—my betrothed wife.
Never to see me in this mortal state—
Never to these pale, faithful lips of mine
To give the answering kiss of plighted truth.
God shower His blessings on her! May she live,
Unscathed, in all the perils of the time,
And love of me be thought no crime in her
By those who wield the destinies of France,
And slay the innocent.

FAUCHET.

Amen, amen—for her, and all we love.

DUCOS.

We grow too serious. If we ransack thus
The stores of memory for joys bygone,
For hopes decayed, and loves for ever lost,
We shall unman ourselves, and yield our breath
Like love-sick maidens, who, in deep decline,
Aye prattle prettily of moonlit seas,
Fresh flowers, green meads, and shady forest walks,
To the last moment of their artless lives.
In my philosophy there are no tears,
No sighs, no groans, no useless fond regrets,
But a stout heart, and laughter to the last.

(Sings.)

THE CAP AND BELLS.

Did you ever trust a friend,
And when cheated trust him more?
Ever seek to gain your end,
Knocking at a rich man's door?
Do you trust your Doris fair,
When her tale of love she tells?
You deserve the cap you wear,
Jingle, jangle—shake your bells.

Think you that the men are wise
Who embark in public strife?
Or their judgment do you prize
Who for country risk their life?
Truth's existence could you swear?
Or affirm where honour dwells?
You deserve the cap you wear,
Jingle, jangle—shake your bells.

FONFRÈDE.

The voice is good—the singer, my good friend—
The manner perfect, but the song itself
A baseless libel. Try again, Ducos,
And give us something in a nobler mood.
We may not die with falsehood on our tongues,
And gibes and sneers curvetting on our lips.

DUCOS.

If, like a swan, I must expire in song,
Hear my death anthem. Join it, if you will.

THE GREY OWL.

The grey owl sat on the belfry leads,
And looked o'er the Seine to the place of heads,
Over the Seine to the Place de Grève.
The winds were sighing, the trees replying.
The moonlight streamed o'er the abbey nave,
Over the housetops silently lying
White as the mist when the morn is new;
And aye the owl, so solemn of look,
The speckled grey of his plumage shook,
And screeched in the turret—tu wheet, tu whoo!

Clear and full the moonlight swam
Around the towers of Notre Dame,
And tinged on the Grève the guillotine—
The winds were sighing, the trees replying—
When a cry was heard the gusts between,
A moan for the dead, and not for the dying,
Dolefully sounding the faubourgs through.
'T was the howl of a dog for his master slain,
And the grey owl flapped his wings again,
And screeched in the turret—tu wheet, tu whoo!

He flapped his wings, and away he lurched
Over the Seine, and resting, perched

On the high cross-beam of the guillotine top.
The winds were sighing, the trees replying.

The tail of the howling hound did drop
As he saw through the pallid moonlight flying
The doleful bird loom into his view ;

He ceased his moan and slunk away,
And the old owl rustled his pinions grey,
And screeched from the scaffold—tu wheet, tu whoo !

“ Hurra ! ” quoth he, as the creature ran ;

“ What right have dogs to moan for man,

Or of love like this to make pretence ? ”

The winds were sighing, the trees replying.

“ Such canine truth is a foul offence ;

For if every fool on the guillotine dying,

Had a friend like this to howl and rue,

Their noise would drown the people’s roar

When it tasted blood and clamoured for more.”

And the grey owl screeched—tu wheet, tu whoo !

“ I wot that to-morrow’s sun shall see

The death of a goodly company—

I trust no dogs will howl for them.”

The winds were sighing, the trees replying.

“ Two-and-twenty we condemn—

One has escaped from the shame of dying,

Opened a door and glided through ;
Yet two-and-twenty heads in all
Under the bloody knife shall fall.”
And the grey owl screeched—tu wheet, tu whoo !

“ Many shall follow them day by day,
The harvest-time shall not delay—
The headsman’s harvest, so ripe, so red.”
The winds were sighing, the trees replying.

“ I know the name of each sentenced head—
Danton, the harsh and death-defying—
All his friends that think him true—
Brutal and greedy Père Duchêne,
With all his comrades, all his train.”
And the grey owl screeched—tu wheet, tu whoo !

“ And after a while a greater still
Shall tread the road, shall climb the hill,
Amid the shouts of the changeful crowd”—
The winds were sighing, the trees replying—
“ And shall headless sleep in a bloody shroud.
Hated in life, accursed in dying,
He shall meet the doom of the twenty-two ;
And his name shall live the world to scare—
’T is Robespierre ! ’t is Robespierre ! ”
And the grey owl screeched—tu wheet, tu whoo !

SILLERY.

Who is your owl, Ducos ?—the embodied soul
Of Marat visiting the earth again ?

Whoe'er he be, his prophecies are safe,
And through the glooms of Time his eyes can see
About as clearly as some men's, I know.
'T is a brave bird, Ducos, and speaks the truth,
Although his voice is harsh, his truth a fear,
And deeds of blood his too familiar thought.

LASOURCE.

Behold the dawn. It breaks upon the world.
How at this hour the oceans sport their waves,
And turn their frothy ringlets to the light,
And all the peaks of Alps and Apennines
Catch on their snowy heights the ruddy gold,
The silver, and the purple, and the grey,
And all the glory of its majesty.
The ancient forests shake their lordly boughs,
And pay obeisance to the rising morn,
The green fields smile, dew glistening, in its face,
The distant towns and villages awake,
The milk-maid sings, the cow-boy winds his horn,
And lowing cattle climb the sunward hills,
The twin grey towers of ancient Nôtre Dame
Are gilded with a smile, like hoary age
Relaxing to behold an infant's play—
Aye, even the gory guillotine receives
The splendour of the morning, and the slave
Drinks of the sunshine freely as the free.
What beauty compasses the teeming world !

What hideous speetacles ungrateful men
Throw in its face, to tire it of itself !
Beautiful morn ! my blessing upon day !

SILLERY.

And mine—if worth acceptance. But, behold,
The gaoler comes—our feast is at an end ;
The death-bell tolls. Time fades to nothingness ;
The hideous dream of life draws to its close ;
The morning of Eternity is near.
Let us arise, and wake like healthful men.

FAUCHET.

May God have merey on us, and forgive
Our enemies, as we forgive them now.

VERGNIAUD.

Farewell, dear brothers—farewell, friends beloved.
The victims of a fearful tyranny
We die, but leave our names an heritage
That France shall wear, and boast of to the world.

* * * * *

THE KING AND THE NIGHTINGALES.

A LEGEND OF HAVERING.

[Havering-atte-Bower, in Essex, was the favourite retirement of King Edward the Confessor, who so delighted in its solitary woods, that he shut himself up in them for weeks at a time. Old legends say that he met with but one annoyance in that pleasant seclusion—the continual warbling of the nightingales, pouring such floods of music upon his ear during his midnight meditations, as to disturb his devotions. He therefore prayed that never more within the bounds of that forest might nightingale's song be heard. His prayer, adds the legend, was granted. The following versification of the story shows a different result to his prayers—a result which if it contradict tradition, does not, it is presumed, contradict poetical justice.]

KING Edward dwelt at Havering-atte-Bower—
Old, and enfeebled by the weight of power—
Sick of the troublous majesty of kings—
Weary of duty and all mortal things—
Weary of day—weary of night—forlorn—
Cursing, like Job, the hour that he was born.
Thick woods environed him, and in their shade
He roamed all day, and told his beads, and prayed.
Men's faces pained him, and he barred his door
That none might find him ;—even the sunshine bore

No warmth or comfort to his wretched sight ;
And darkness pleased no better than the light.
He scorned himself for eating food like men,
And lived on roots and water from the fen ;
And aye he groaned, and bowed his hoary head—
Did penance, and put nettles in his bed—
Wore sackcloth on his loins, and smote his breast—
Told all his follies, all his sins confessed—
Made accusations of himself to heaven,
And owned to crimes too great to be forgiven,
Which he had thought, although he had not done—
Blackening his blackness ; numbering one by one
Unheard of villanies without a name,
As if he gloried in inventing shame,
Or thought to win the grace of heaven by lies,
And gain a saintship in a fiend's disguise.

Long in these woods he dwelt—a wretched man,
Shut from all fellowship, self-placed in ban—
Laden with ceaseless prayer and boastful vows,
Which day and night he breathed beneath the boughs.
But sore distressed he was, and wretched quite,
For every evening with the waning light
A choir of nightingales, the brakes among,
Deluged the woods with overflow of song.
“ Unholy birds,” he said, “ your throats be riven,
You mar my prayers, you take my thoughts from heaven.”
But still the song, magnificent and loud,
Poured from the trees like rain from thunder-cloud.

Now to his vexed and melancholy ear
Sounding like bridal music, pealing clear;
Anon it deepened on his throbbing brain
To full triumphal march or battle strain;
Then seemed to vary to a choral hymn,
Or *De Profundis* from cathedral dim,
“*Te Deum*,” or “*Hosanna to the Lord*,”
Chanted by deep-voiced priests in full accord.
He shut his ears, he stamped upon the sod—
“Be ye accursed, ye take my thoughts from God!
And thou, beloved saint, to whom I bend,
Lamp of my life, my guardian and my friend,
Make intercession for me, sweet St. John,
And hear the anguish of thy suffering son.
May nevermore within these woods be heard
The song of morning or of evening bird,
May nevermore their harmonies awake
Within the precincts of this lonely brake,
For I am weary, old, and full of woe,
And their songs vex me. This one boon bestow,
That I may pray; and give my thoughts to thee,
Without distraction of their melody;
And that within these bowers my groans and sighs
And ceaseless prayers be all the sounds that rise.
Let God alone possess me, last and first;
And, for His sake, be all these birds accursed.”

This having said, he started where he stood,
And saw a stranger walking in the wood;

A purple glory, pale as amethyst,
Clad him all o'er. He knew th' Evangelist ;
And, kneeling on the earth with reverence meet,
He kissed his garment's hem, and clasped his feet.
" Rise," said the saint, " and know, unhappy king,
That true Religion hates no living thing ;
It loves the sunlight, loves the face of man,
And takes all virtuous pleasure that it can—
Shares in each harmless joy that Nature gives,
Bestows its sympathy on all that lives,
Sings with the bird, rejoices with the bee,
And, wise as manhood, sports with infancy.
Let not the nightingales disturb thy prayers,
But make thy thanksgiving as pure as theirs ;
So shall it mount on wings of love to heaven,
And thou, forgiving, be thyself forgiven."

The calm voice ceased ;—King Edward dared not
look,

But bent to earth, and blushed at the rebuke ;
And though he closed his eyes and hid his face,
He knew the saint had vanished from the place.
And when he rose, ever the wild woods rang
With the sweet song the birds of evening sang.
No more he cursed them ; loitering on his way
He listened pleased, and blessed them for their lay,
And on the morrow quitted Havering
To mix with men, and be again a king,
And fasting, moaning, scorning, praying less,
Increased in virtue and in happiness.

EVERMORE—NEVERMORE.

“ WILT thou run to me for ever ? ”

Said the ocean to the river.

“ Will ye ever fall on my hills and plains ? ”

Said the dry land to the rains.

“ Will ye ever blossom while I sing ? ”

Said the lark to the flowers of spring.

“ Will ye ever ripen while I shine ? ”

Said the sun to the corn and vine.

And ever the answer the breezes bore

Was, “ *Evermore—for evermore.* ”

“ As long as all these things shall be,”

Said I, to Rosa kissing me,

“ Shall Truth be sharper than a sword ?

Shall kindness be its own reward ?

Shall a free heart smoothe the roughest way ?

Shall Hope shed light on the darkest day ?

Shall tempests spare the reeds that bow,
And thou love me as thou lovest now?"
And ever the answer her sweet lips bore
Was, "*Evermore—for evermore.*"

"But shall I ever come back from thee?"

Said the river to the sea ;

"Or I?" said the flower that Rosa threw
Into its waters bright and blue.

"Will ye bloom again on the summer eves?"
aid the tree to its withered leaves.

"Wilt thou fall again when the north winds blow?"

Said the grass to the melting snow.

And ever the answer the breezes bore

Was, "*Nevermore—oh, nevermore.*"

"If such the rule beneath the skies,"

Said Rosa, gazing in my eyes,

"Shall Duty quit the debt we owe her,
Or blisses fail the bliss bestower?

Shall a miser's heart be improved by his gold?

Shall the wealth of Love be ever told?

Or thou prove false to the tender vow

Thou swearest and repeatest now?"

And aye the answer my true lips bore

Was, "*Nevermore—oh, nevermore.*"

THE TRUE COMPANION.

Give me the man, however old and staid,
Or worn with sorrow and perplexity,
Who, when he walks in sunshine or in shade,
By woodland bowers, or bare beach of the sea,
O'er hill-top, or in valleys green with me,
Throws off his age and gambols like a child,
And finds a boyish pleasure in the wild,
Rejuvenescent on the flowery lea :
Him shall the year press lightly as he goes ;
The kindly wisdom gathered in the fields
Shall be his antidote to wordly woes ;
And the o'erflowing joy that nature yields
To her true lovers shall his heart enclose,
And blunt the shafts of care like iron shields.

WELCOME BACK.

Sweet songs of nightingale and lark
That greet the golden dawn,
Or twilight deepening into dark,
By mountain, grove, or lawn ;
Long days, clear nights, and balmy winds,
Fresh flowers and forest leaves,
Birds, blossoms, fruits of ruddy rinds,
New hay, and barley sheaves ;
All joys of nature, sounds or sights
Of forest, stream, or plain,
Ye're welcome, welcome, welcome ever,
And welcome back again.

Fair hopes, forgotten 'mid our toils;
Sweet visions dreamed of yore,
Calm thoughts effaced in life's turmoils,
Old songs we've sung before ;

Forgotten comrades, friends estranged,
Acquaintance o'er the seas,
Old feelings weakened, lost, or changed,
And youthful memories ;
Pure joys of home, kind words, sweet smiles,
And sympathy in pain,
Ye 're welcome, welcome, welcome ever,
And welcome back again.

For heaven is kind, and makes no stint
Of blessings, though we die ;
They pass in circles, and imprint
Their footsteps as they fly.
'T is ours to train them when begun
To keep the circle true,
And not neglect, forget, or shun
The old ones for the new.
Ne'er to the hearts that prize them well
They hold their course in vain :
They 're welcome, welcome, welcome ever,
And welcome back again.

A LOVER'S FANCIES.

- " *What sounds like pewter?* " said my Rose, in play—
" The fall of earth upon a coffin lid."
- " *Like tin?* "—" The cock-crow heralding the day,
Or infant wailing that its mother chid."
- " *Like steel?* "—" The quick sharp twitter on the spray
Of numerous sparrows in the foliage hid."
- " *Like gold?* "—" The strong wind over forests borne,
Or full bass singer chanting prayer and creed."
- " *Like brass?* "—" The neighing of a frightened steed,
Or roar of people clamouring for corn."
- " *Like iron?* "—" Thunder-claps suddenly woken, ",
Startling the city in the summer night."
- " *Like silver?* "—" Thy sweet voice that speaks delight,
And breathes Love's promise, never to be broken."

THE NINE BATHIERS.

“ I WOULD like to bathe in milk,”
Said little Agnes, fresh and fair,
With her taper fingers smooth as silk,
Her cherry cheeks, and nut-brown hair—
“ In a bath of ivory, filled to the brim,
I would love to lie and swim,
And float like a strawberry plucked at dawn
In the lily-white waves of milk new drawn.”

“ And I,” said Rose, with her eyes divine,
“ Would love to bathe in the ruddy wine,
Trailing my long and coal-black locks
In purple clarets and amber hocks ;
And I would have a fountain play
So that the wine might fall in spray,

And I might stand in the sparkling rain,
Statue like, in perfect rest;—
And if the droplets left a stain,
I 'd have a fountain of champagne
To wash the purple from my breast,
And troops of slaves, in rich attire,
Should scatter myrrh and incense sweet,
And bring me, should my looks desire,
A golden ewer to wash my feet.
I 'd tread on carpets of velvet woof,
My mirrors should reach from floor to roof,
And every slave should envy me
My loveliness and luxury."

"And I," said Jane, with her eyes' dark glances
Radiant with untold romances,
"Would choose a milder bath than thine,
Nor crumple my curls with fiery wine.
In a bath of alabaster bright,
In a marble-floored and lofty hall,
Transplendant with the regal light
Of a thousand lamps from roof and wall,
Amid exotics rich and rare
Filling with odours all the air,
In clear rose-water I would lie,
Like a lily on a lake serene,
Or move my limbs to the harmony
Of an orchestra unseen,

Placed in a chamber far remote,
And floating sing, and singing float."

"Sweet bath," said the calm, fair, Margaret ;
"But the bath I'd choose is sweeter yet.
I'd have it in a rich saloon
Open to the breeze of noon,
With marble columns smooth and high,
And crimson damask drapery,
Filled with statues chaste and rare
Of nymphs and gods divinely fair.
Of jet-black marble the bath should be,
With no white speck on its purity ;
It should not flow with milk or wine,
With scented waters or with brine ;
It should be filled with meadow dew,
Gathered at morning in the grass,
'Mid hare-bell cups and violets blue,
And my bath should be my looking-glass ;
And I would have a score of maids
Glowing with beauty, each and all,
To twist my locks in graceful braids,
And dress me for a festival."

"And I," said Lilius, raising her eyes
Clear as morn, of passion full,
"Would love to bathe under Eastern skies,
In the palace gardens of Istamboul,

In the hanging groves of Babylon,
Or Bagdad, city of the sun,
' Mid orange, date, and trailing vine,
Palm, and myrtle, and eglantine ;
I would have fifty fountains fair,
' Mid bowers of roses and evergreens,
And bathing in the odorous air,
I would be waited on by queens."

" And I," said Ann, with her drooping tresses,
And eyes as full of love's caresses
As the morning is of day,
And mouth so ripe and kindly smiling
' T was never made to answer " Nay,"
" I would bathe in the fresh blue sea
With the wild waves sporting over me ;
I would toy with the harmless foam,
Passing my fingers like a comb
Through the crest of each wave that reared
Its spray, as white as Neptune's beard ;—
With a fresh wind blowing across the reach,
I would dive and float again and again,
And dress myself on the bare sea beach,
In a nook invisible to men."

" And I," said Laura, " would choose my bath
Where a river took its lonely path

On round smooth shingle, clear in its flow,
Showing the pebbles that slept below,
Through a flowery lawn well shaven and soft
And cool to the feet. I would not care
For bands of music, if larks aloft
Filled with their songs the sunny air ;
I would not ask for lustres bright,
If the clear morning shed its light ;
Nor for marble statue of youth and maid,
If oaks and poplars lent their shade ;
Nor for exoties of choice perfume,
If the Meadow-sweet were fresh in bloom ;
I would but ask for a summer day,
And nearest eyes ten miles away."

"And I," said tuneful Isabel,
With her soft blue eyes and cheek vermeil,
With her witching smile and modest blush,
And voice to make the blackbird hush,
"I would not bathe by the sea-beach cold,
Nor river running through open wold ;
I would not bathe in halls of state,
In wine, or milk, or honey-dew ;
On me should no serving maidens wait,
Nor luxury my senses woo.
I would bathe far up in a Highland burn,
Hidden from sight in its every turn,

Deep embowered 'mid pendant larch,
And silver birches poised on high,
With nothing alive to cross my path
But the bright incurious butterfly;
In a limpid basin of the rocks
I would unbind my flaxen locks,
And lay my clothes on the mossy stone,
Happy—happy—and all alone."

"And I," said Geraldine, smoothing back,
From her stately brow, her tresses black,
A blush, like morning over the isles,
Dawning upon her cheeks, and smiles
Flashing about her lips and eyes,
Full of meanings and mysteries,
"I would love to bathe in a quiet mere,
As a mirror smooth, as a dew-drop clear,
So still, that my floating limbs should make
The only ripples upon the lake ;
I'd have it fringed with fruits and flowers,
Forests and orchards, groves and bowers,
That whenever I bathed in the noons of spring
I might pluck laburnums blossoming,
Or shake, as I floated, the lilac blooms,
Or chestnut cones with their rich perfumes,
Over my glancing neck and shoulders,
Concealed in the leaves from all beholders,

Except from the ring-dove—too intent
On her own pleasures to look at mine ;
And if I bathed when the flowers were spent,
And peaches blushed in the autumn shine,
I would choose a solitary nook
By the confluence of a brook,
Where the apples were ripe, and the jet-black cherries,
And the juicy luscious dark mulberries,
Or jargonelles of a ruddy gold,
And nectarines as sweet to taste
As the kisses of urchins three years old,
Grew within reach, that stretching in haste
My hand to the boughs as I floated near,
Or stood knee-deep in the lucid mere,
I might rustle and shake the pulpy treasure
Into the water for my pleasure,
Catching an apple as it fell,
Or diving for a jargonelle."

Sweet maids, if bound by Fate's decree
To choose amongst you for a bride,
So great your charms, 't would puzzle me
For which dear syren to decide.
But were I Sultan of Cathay,
With twenty thousand pounds a day,
I would not choose—but, ere I'd done,
Woo and wed you every one.

THE WATER TARANTELLA.

[“The condition of those who were afflicted with Tarantism was in many cases united with so great a sensibility to music, that at the very first tone of their favourite melodies, they sprang up shouting for joy and danced on without intermission, until they sank to the ground exhausted, and almost lifeless. Some loved to hear the sound of water, and delighted in hearing of gushing springs, and rushing cascades and streams.”—HECKER’S EPIDEMICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES. THE DANCING MANIA.]

The wind blows low on the fields and hedges,
There is a murmur amid the sedges,
A low sweet sound where the water gushes
Forth from the grass amid the rushes ;
It is a streamlet small and young,
It loves to dally the mosses among,
It trickles slowly,
It whispers lowly,

On its breast the thistle drops its down,
The water lily
So white and stilly
Sleeps in its lap till its leaves grow brown.

*Dance, poor Eveleen—dance, and dream—
Soft is the music, and fresh the stream.*

We will follow thee where it flows—
It leaves the sedges dank behind,
And on its fringe a willow shows
Its silvery leaflets to the wind;
And a brook comes down from far away
And babbles into it all the day—
And both together creep through meads
Where the shy plover hides and feeds ;—
And then away through fields of corn
Or stretch of meadows newly shorn,
Noiselessly they flow and clear
By open wold and covered brake,
But if you listen you may hear
The steady music that they make.

*Dance, poor Eveleen, dance—we follow—
O'er field, through copse, o'er lawn, through hollow.*

And now the stream begins to run
Over the pebbles in its bed,
To rumple its breast and glance in the sun,
And curl to the light breeze overhead.

No longer loitering, lingering, calm,
It hurries away o'er the chafing shingle
Humming a song, singing a psalm
Through the orchard, down the dingle.
Pools like mirrors adorn its breast,
And there the trout and the minnow rest,
The ringdove sings in her nest alone
The tender song that love has taught her,
And the redbreast sits on the boulder stone,
Washing his plumes in the wimpling water.

*Brisker now let the music sound ;
Dance, Evelleen, dance, we follow thee ever,
And tread the ground with a quick rebound,
Away, away with the rolling river.*

Fed by its tributary rills
From distant valleys with circling hills,
And travelling seaward merrily brawling,
Wild, impassioned, rapid, and strong,
With voice of power to the green woods calling,
The impetuous river dashes along,
And is sweeping, leaping, through the meadows
Almost as fast as the driving shadows
Of clouds that fly before the wind,
Down to the chasmy precipices,
There to burst in foaming fall ;—
It bursts, it thunders, it roars, it hisses—
An iris is its coronal ;

And the pendulous trees above it shiver,
Bathed by the rain of that rampant river.

*So dance, fair Eveleen, faster, faster,
Unloose thy zone, thy locks untwine ;
Thy bosom, no more like the alabaster,
Is flushed, and heated, and red like wine.
Thy pulse is beating, thy blood is heating,
Thy lips are open, thine eye-balls shine.*

And now the river spends its wrath,
The music sinks, the winds blow low ;
Its bosom broad is a nation's path—
Smooth and pleasant is its flow.
A boat shoots by with its rowers trim,
A ferryman plies his lazy oar ;
And miles adown, in the distance dim,
There stands a city on the shore.

*By corn fields yellow, by meadows green,
And stately gardens, we advance ;
Still we follow thee, Eveleen—
Gentle, gentler, be thy dance.*

Behold, upon a grassy lawn,
Sloped smoothly downwards to the brink,
With large soft eyes, a dapple fawn
Stoops to the lucid wave to drink ;

And, lo ! an avenue of oak,
Whose wrinkled stems, of giant girth,
Have stood unharmed the winter's stroke
For thrice a century, firm in earth,
Their boughs o'ertopped by the turrets hoary
Of a mansion old and famed in story.

*They pass, all pass,
As in magic glass,
And still we trace the placid stream—
Castle and tower,
And park and bower ;
Dance, poor Eveleen, dance and dream.*

A hundred ships are in the river,
Their tall masts point to a clear blue sky,
Their sails are furled, their pennants curled,
To the sweet west wind that wantons by,
And every flag, emblazoned fair,
Flaps at its will on the sunny air.
There is a peal of sabbath bells,
Over the river's breast it swells ;
The tall proud steeples look calmly down
On the quiet houses of the town ;
'T is a day of love, of rest, of peace,
Eveleen, the song must cease.

*Gently, Eveleen, gently rest,
Softly on thy pillow sleep ;
The fit is o'er, thy heaving breast
Will calm itself in slumber deep ;
Thou'st danced, poor maid, the tarantelle,
Thou'st danced it long and danced it well,
Thou'st trod the maze, and traced the shore,
Thou shalt be healed for evermore.*

LONDON :

VIZETELLY BROTHERS AND CO. PRINTERS AND ENGRAVERS,
15 FETTERBOROUGH COURT, FLEET STREET.

62457B¹⁰



University of California, Los Angeles



L 005 488 896 1

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 370 465 7

